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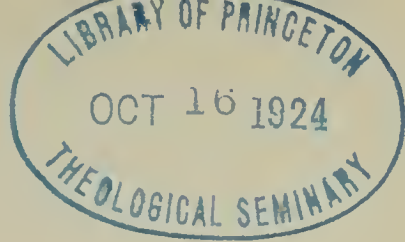
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Studies of Jesus

The Sermons in this little volume formed the last quarter section of a course preached in the Anthon Memorial Church, on successive Sunday mornings, from Advent 1879 to Easter 1880. They were printed from week to week for the members of the congregation, and for their easier preservation are thrown together under one cover.

The course covered the following topics :

1. FACT OR FABLE: THE HISTORICAL VERITY OF JESUS.
2. THE GROWTH OF JESUS IN HEBREW HISTORY.
3. THE GROWTH OF JESUS IN HUMANITY AT LARGE.
4. THE AGE OF JESUS.
5. THE EDUCATION OF JESUS.
6. THE CRISIS OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.
7. THE PLAN OF JESUS.
8. THE PUBLIC CAREER OF JESUS.
9. THE DEALINGS OF JESUS WITH INDIVIDUALS.
10. THE THEOLOGY OF JESUS.
11. THE ETHICS OF JESUS.
12. THE SOCIAL SCIENCE OF JESUS.
13. THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF JESUS.
14. SEMI-TONES IN THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.
15. SEMI-TONES IN THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.
16. THE PERFECTION OF JESUS.
17. THE DEATH OF JESUS.
18. THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS.
19. THE CONTINUED LIFE OF JESUS.
20. THE CHARACTER OF JESUS—THE CHRIST OF GOD.
21. THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE.



STUDIES OF JESUS.

BY

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THE PERFECTION OF JESUS.

“ I find no fault in this man.”—*Luke* 23 : 4.

“ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”—*Eph.* 4 : 13.

Humanum est errare, wrote the Roman centuries ago, and the consciousness of mankind, among all races and in all ages, has confirmed the sad sentence. It is human to err. Every one errs more or less. No life points undeviatingly true. We do not look for immaculateness in any one. We are sure that the soundest have some weak spots in them. When the noblest characters are found in some weakness or folly, we are grieved but scarcely surprised. The best miss their way, slip and stumble and fall.

Society is constituted on the assumption that human nature is faulty. The church and the state provide for the correction and the restraint of this imperfect nature. Perfection may be the far-off ideal of humanity, but only as the man is prophesied in the embryo. The utmost we expect of men is an almost perfect development of some one virtue. A man will here and there succeed in

forcing some special quality into surpassing excellence, but we invariably find him defective in some other correlative quality. Froude would have Cæsar the type of noble power, the ideal soldier and statesman, but he cannot gloss over the dubiousness of his private life. St. Francis is divinely spiritual, but he leaves the world to take care of itself. It seems as though the moral sap of man did not suffice to feed every function of the life. He grows splendidly tall and straight, but is angular and narrow. He spreads genially over the earth, but ceases to aspire after the heavens. He runs out into a beautiful foliage at the cost of the fruit. The saint is the perfect type of a species, and we classify him, label him, and put him into our ethical museum as Moses the man of meekness, Joseph the example of chastity, and have to make a full collection of the varieties of character before we can fill out our ideal of man.

Our best are specialists. They are provincialists, not cosmopolitans, in character.

A flawless soul, *faultless and full*, who has ever seen? Where does history embalm this rarest gem of humanity?

We have been taught to believe that one such rarest jewel earth has yielded; that humanity has flowered out in faultless beauty of goodness, in one man, faultless and realizing the fulness of rounded character.

This is a profoundly significant fact, if so be that it is a fact. Can we verify this surprising belief with reasonable certitude?

I. So far as the received records go we have the portraiture of a life which can be justly faulted nowhere. There are a few incidents in this life-story which have given rise to criticism. The difficulties here lie on the surface of the story, and have doubtless given trouble to all thoughtful readers of the gospels—and the *thoughtless* readers will not probably think enough now to be troubled by anything I shall say.

The first of these is the withering of the fig-tree. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem from Bethany in the last week of his life. He hungers. Seeing a fig-tree by the roadside, he approaches it hoping to pluck some of the luscious fruit. He finds no fruit, and is overheard to say to the tree, "Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever." The next morning, in passing by the same spot, the disciples notice that it is dried up from the roots. This certainly looks like impatience, irritability, anger—and unreasonable anger too. To blight a tree for not having yielded fruit to refresh him, supposing him to have such power, would be pettishness like to that of the spoiled child who punishes the table for hurting him when he falls against it. To curse a tree for not yielding him fruit, when, as the Evangelist himself tells us, it was

not the time for its fruit, is an act so preposterously inconceivable of Jesus that we cannot believe it. All his life denies it. The Church has naturally sought to idealize the story away into a symbol, a wrought-word, a parable in action, concerning the judgment of God coming upon the nation for its efflorescent profession and its fruitless sterility of character ; just as we sing to-day our "Nothing but leaves," applying the story thus to the judgment on our individual lives. But both St. Mark and St. Matthew give another interpretation. They make Jesus, when he notices the amazement of the disciples at the total withering of the tree, exhort them to faith as the means of doing greater marvels. "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done." Clearly if Jesus was giving the disciples an object-lesson on faith, he would not have done it under such circumstances, attended with such objectionable ethical features. He would simply have blighted a tree without any such display of temper as is flatly unbelievable of him. The disciples may have put in the accessories. But I rather think that the hint given is the key to the singular story. The inordinate hunger for the merely marvellous, always following Jesus, expectant of the miraculous, and pre-

pared to see it in natural actions above their ken, was probably at work on some incident which in its true features is now lost to us. In either case we have an unconscious misrepresentation of Jesus. This is plain in the story itself. We are relieved, therefore, from the necessity of seriously considering it.

The cleansing of the Temple offends some people. Certainly it was an unusual manifestation of feeling leading to a surprising action. But I can find no trace of any intemperateness of feeling, or of anything whatsoever inconsistent with the general spirit of Jesus. Only one of the writers says anything about a whip in his hand. The other three simply narrate, as St. Mark reports it, that "Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves, and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

This occurred at the opening of the last week. Jesus had come in the day before from Bethany, and entering into the temple, as St. Mark significantly records—with his fondness for noticing the searching look of Jesus—"he looked round about

on all things." His only action that first day was an inspection of the field. He always looked well before acting. He saw doubtless enough to fill him with indignation. He saw the desecration of the temple, which now after long years of relaxing reverence had utterly secularized the house of God. The pagan worship of Israel could never have been very spiritual in its outer aspect. The slaughtering and burning of animals cannot well induce a very lofty sense of God. In the Passover week, with the host of pilgrims in the city, the necessary arrangements for supplying the worshippers with animals must have made the precincts of the temple a huge drove-yard and abattoir, and crowded every nook and corner with the desks of the bankers and brokers engaged in exchanging the money of the different peoples represented there. The sounds which filled his ears were the bleating and lowing of penned cattle, the chinking of coins upon the tables, the loud, harsh notes of the busy bargainers—and all this in the place where as a boy he had felt his soul open with an unutterable sense of being in his "Father's House." It must have seemed the very sign of the death of pure religion in formalism and superstition, the usurping of the Father's House by Mammon the gain-god. The first word he had then to utter was one of his wrought-words, a parable in mighty deed, which should sign to the people the cleans-

ing which their prophet felt their whole religion needed.

I think I can almost see the scene. A great rush of indignation at the profanation going on under the sanction of the priests, a leaping forth of his outraged reverence through those royal eyes, a hush of awe among the bystanders, as by the majesty of his lion-like attitude he sweeps the mean souled dickerers out of the hallowed precincts, too dumfounded to resist, made cowards by their consciences, the Shylocks of the money-bags not daring to breathe a word though they saw their precious "ducats" rolling round the stone floors—and for one brief moment the temple left free for the Spirit of God to whisper down the columned walks, and for men to bow and say, "Lo, God was in this place and I knew it not."

So far from thinking this scene a blot upon the story of Jesus, I find it a story that fills my human veins with enthusiasm. That meek and lowly Nazarene, so sweet and patient, had beneath the calm surface of his saintly gentleness infinite depths of feeling, which when stirred by a great wrong could rise stormfully as old Ocean—only yesterday a burnished mirror of the peaceful sky. Before a wrong which thus stirred his soul-depths, this carpenter's son never paused to ask who was on his side or who opposed him, felt no weakness in being alone, and saw no obstacle in a throng of

angry men with sullen brows and clenched fists standing round their property, knew no tremor of fear in facing a city single-handed, hesitated not at the sanction of church and state upon a hoary custom, but with the courage of the real hero strode up to the venerable iniquity and smote it! I would not for aught miss that scene from the stories of Jesus.

The invectives against the Pharisees give rise to the only serious question concerning the faultlessness of Jesus, in so far as the records are concerned. They certainly show an intensity of feeling, a severity of tone, a biting, burning irony, a terrific sarcasm which seem to be out of harmony with the characteristic spirit of Jesus, and which look very much like that which in other men we would call unholy anger.

These traits are not in keeping with the Jesus the church has fashioned—a mild, meek, harmless being, full only of gentleness and kindliness. The expression of his face when at rest was undoubtedly this sweet mildness. It is this expression which art has caught and perpetuated. But this unbalanced by stronger and sterner moods would never have made the forceful Jesus who is revolutionizing history. Gentle the divine man must be, but a *man* with the robust feelings and actions of manliness. Placid this deep sea as the summer's Pacific, but when roused capable of a

stormfulness measurable by its depth. Within that mighty soul were slumberous forces which when stirred to indignation gathered all the infinite passion of his nature into a wrath terrible as the anger of nature.

It belongs to the essential character of love that it shall have a reaction equal to its yearning outgoings. The heart has its positive and negative poles, love and hate, and the two are equidistant from the mean. What scornful wrath is like that * of wronged affection? In the lower natures this recoil shows itself in the personal relations of life, in jealousy, revenge, hatred—the electric shock of heart against heart which makes the storms of society. In the greater natures, where individual relationships are swallowed up in the larger area of ideas and principles, this recoil shows itself in the intensity of indignant denunciation which the patriot heaps upon the betrayer of his country, the theologian pours upon the errors which seduce men's faith, the social reformer hurls against the tyrannous customs of society. When a man lives for an idea, a principle, a cause, all his enthusiasm for that mission of his life rises against the men, the institutions, the beliefs which oppose that movement in a vehemence which lesser natures misjudge and think personal feeling, but which is really the purest and noblest emotion of his being. I am not at all surprised, therefore, at the mistake, so

wholly superficial I think, which an acute critic like Renan has made over these invectives of Jesus. He discerns rightly a noticeable change in the spirit of Jesus between the early joyous Galilean teaching and the later controversies with the Pharisees. He sees accurately that this grows out of the persistent, malignant enmity of the Pharisees towards him. He admires artistically these caustic, scathing invectives, the play of the lightning leaping from the storm-cloud, but he sees in them the culmination of the change wrought in Jesus by this war of Pharisaism against him, under which the young enthusiast of Galilee, sweet-souled and gentle, is gradually soured and embittered by disappointment, till in the consciousness of failure he turns upon the authors of his rejection by the nation the fulness of his curdled zeal, stinging, scalding, eating into the very souls of his foes. This is just enough like the surface of the fact to be taken for a portrait while it is an utter caricature. It misses the inner surface of this incident as read historically and psychologically. I hope you found the historical clue in the view I gave you of the public life of Jesus. In his early Galilean ministry there is no trace of aught but a kindly treatment of the Pharisees. When they begin to dog his steps he avoids them. He goes out of his way to escape direct conflict with them. He changes his method of teaching and begins to

speak in parables, that they might not lay hold of his words. He leaves the Galilean cities and goes out on a succession of teaching tours through the adjacent country, returning to his head-quarters in Capernaum only to find his relentless foes awaiting him there, and then to start forth on a wider circuit. At last it is no longer possible to avoid the conflict. He foresees his speedy arrest and death. He forefeels the peril of his "little flock" exposed to the "leaven of the Pharisees" unwarned of its subtlety. Then, only then, he begins to turn upon the Pharisees. He holds up to ridicule their pretentious shams, he exposes their hypocrisy, he seeks in every way to disillusionize his Jewish disciples of the reverence these good churchmen called forth. In this period fall the severe rebukes and scathing sarcasms which he utters against the Pharisees. And this is towards the very end of his career. They culminate in the terrific flood of long-suppressed indignation which heaps up one upon another his "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees." Literature scarcely holds the equal of these invectives. But if, as we read and shudder, we are tempted to think our Jesus has lost his old sweetness and become a soured reformer, we have only to read on to the remarkable passage that closes this surpassing scene. As the last woe dies away upon our ears, we hear — that bursting lament of his great heart—"O Jerusalem, Jerusa-

lem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

In the rich moodfulness of Jesus there is an hour of November in the long June day. Upon the face of that serene life the clouds gather and for a moment darken everything, but lo! even while we shiver in the chill gloom the sun bursts out once more in all the old sweetness and light. All the forces of his unparalleled love for man, of his sublime enthusiasm, of his divine devotion to the truth, rise steaming hot from his great heart, a molten flood, a stormfulness of wrath which for one moment sweeps with apparent pitilessness over his opponents. With the escape of the suppressed fires of indignation, the habitual tenderness looks out from his eyes amid the blinding tear-mist. It is no personal wrong that breeds this tempest. It is the wrong of those for whom his whole life was given. It is the motherliness of his heart—that motherliness which makes the gentle hen turn so fiercely upon the dogs that drive her brood from her—which fires his loving soul against the Jewish dogs who hounded away his poor people from his sheltering wings. It is only the obverse pole of his love—his shepherdly heart facing the wolves.

I am never weary of that touch. It is what no

story-maker would have dared to insert—so false to the superficial feeling, so divinely true to nature in its deepest reaches. It redeems the story and saves the character of Jesus. These invectives close his utterances on the Tuesday of the final week, after which he speaks no more to the nation—he here judges and condemns.

Placed historically and analyzed psychologically, this story is no blemish on the character of Jesus, but its highest glory. It is that highest perfection of love which, not for itself but for those whom it serves, burns through the false and evil in men that wilfully opposes itself to the light of truth.

These I believe are the chief spots our highest glasses have detected in the face of this Sun in the human heavens. Like the spots in the physical sun they are really the flaming up of the fires which feed all light and warmth, the incandescence of the soul of truth and love, “dark with excess of light.”

But it may occur to some of you that our records of Jesus are only fragmentary, and that every biography naturally tends to soften blemishes, to drop out faults, and to idealize the character drawn. This is true, and therefore the mere absence of recorded faults would not be conclusive as to the faultlessness of Jesus.

Remember, however, that fragmentary as our records are, they are fuller than those we possess

of most other men of antiquity, which disclose sufficiently their faultiness. They are full enough to present him under manifold circumstances of trial: We see him a hungered, weary, exhausted, suffering intense physical pain and intenser mental anguish. We see him bearing with the spiritual stupidity of his Galilean disciples, misunderstood, misreported, correcting over and over again their mistakes. We see him exposed to sudden alternations of popular feeling, to-day the fervid heats of enthusiasm, to-morrow the chilling sleet of indifference and incredulity. We see him followed by persistent, malignant, unscrupulous bigotry, falsifying his sweetest words, caricaturing his kindest actions, calumniating his purest motives. We see him hounded down by ecclesiastic rulers, deserted by the people, betrayed by one of his followers, foresworn by another, forsaken by all; condemned in a travesty of justice, subjected to the pitiless brutality of the Roman soldiers, tortured slowly to the ignominious end of a culprit, his death-dimming eyes mirroring the grimaces of a fiendish mob, his death-dulling ears echoing the curses of the anointed priests of God. And under these racking vicissitudes of trial, can you or I find one trace of faultiness flawing the matchless sweetness of the most sensitive of souls? Where is there the shadow of an evil thought, of a selfish feeling? He is always simply perfect.

Ask yourselves what men even by this test of their recorded lives have escaped clouding? What characters even under the hands of friends and admirers can put in a demurrer to this *humanum est errare*? Try the noblest and best by this test and who comes forth immaculate?

Socrates is without exception the loftiest figure in Grecian history, a form so grandly good that we do instinctive homage to him as to one of the superhuman men. Xenophon paid his master the sublime tribute that he was never known to do an unjust action or to speak an unholy word. Yet Socrates had impetuous appetites and an irascible temper. I have not the slightest sympathy with those champions of Christ who to exalt him gladly rescue from oblivion the gossip we would fain forget, and blacken the memory of this majestic Greek. I abhor this vile work, done in the name of a master who would have scorned it. I do not credit the traditions which speak lightly of him. Spenser in his wonderful allegory describes Errour as her last defence against the Red Crosse Knight, Holinesse, belching forth her foul breath upon him, and sickening him till he could scarcely stand. The unclean spirit warring against man, when other resources fail, always vomits its own nastiness upon the good, defiling them with its own slime and scenting them with its own stink.

But how is it that while the bitterest enmity raged round Jesus in his life and followed him wherever the apostles bore his story—the wrath of Jewish bigot, of Grecian philosopher, and of Roman ruler—the unclean spirit of Error has never breathed its sullyng whisper over his spotless name?

The noblest Roman of them all was perhaps Marcus Aurelius, the sage and saint upon the imperial throne. We look at his Jove-like head in the Louvre. We see his soul mirrored in his Meditations. A pure, noble, exquisite soul, heroic in its virtue, tender and gentle, so true that as a boy the Emperor Hadrian playing on his name said that he ought to be called not Verus but Verissimus—not the true, but the most true. Abstemious amid Rome's luxuries even to the injury of his health, chaste in a dissolute court, devoting himself upon the throne to the most arduous and unremitting care of his people, regarding himself as the servant of all; the most lovable as the grandest of the Stoics. We need not for a moment listen to the contemptible gossip of that cynical society, but we cannot forget that under his reign there was a persecution of the Christians. We may credit him with ignorance of the real character of the Christians, with being prejudiced by misinformation, against them, even with having no real responsibility for an act possibly ordered by one of his deputies; we may allow for the spirit of the age;

yet it remains, as John Stuart Mill says, "one of the most tragical of facts" that this wise and holy emperor allowed a bloody persecution of a religious sect of such blamelessness as the early Christians. In his Meditations we overhear the sigh of that great heart under the strain of life's temptation, as though impatient of the end of the hard conflict—"Come quickly, O Death, for fear that at last I should forget myself."

Buddha towers above all his countrymen as Gorishanta over his native Himalayas, the sublimest figure of the east before Jesus, whose spiritual ethics and whose personal holiness revolutionized the oldest empires of earth and created the religion that to-day numbers more followers than any other on the globe. His moral beauty was such that we—twenty five hundred years away from him, and separated still further by chasms of race, and tongue, and creed, and philosophy—are fascinated as we follow the heavenly glory of the Light of Asia. He was of all men the most like Jesus in his teachings, his spirit, his very outer life. We do not hesitate in this church of Jesus to do homage to this precursor of the Supreme Master who upon the bosom of this beloved disciple would have laid his head so lovingly. We rejoice in every ray of glory that surrounds him. We would not dim the lustre of one bright beam. We are only saddened and sickened by the bigot-

ry with which a distinguished theologian of this city thinks to exalt the Person of Christ by speaking of "*this fellow Buddha.*" The story of his life, however, as his own disciples tell it, represents him as in his youth indulging in the luxurious enjoyments of a Rajah's son, till his teachers complained of his indifference to wisdom. Even while we admire the heroism of the action, we cannot conceal the error of that touching scene where the heir to the throne of the Sakyas, turning to his palace to announce his determination to renounce everything and become an ascetic, is met by the tidings that a first-born son awaits him, to which his response is, "This is another tie for me to break," and entering the palace he steals into the room where his young wife lies sleeping with her babe upon her arm, and silently waves farewell to mother and son as he goes forth to wander a homeless teacher. The human ties are wrenched that he may bind himself to the higher life. Brilliant critics think that Jesus became indifferent to his family when he entered his public work, but who that recalls the exquisite tenderness of the dying Christ for his mother can allow so unjust a suspicion? No, the one blemish on the story of Sakya Muni—that infirmity of the noblest, which drains out family love in a world-wide philanthropy—rests not on Jesus.

The indubitable fact concerning Buddha is that there is the common story of abrupt change

in his development. Born in a palace, growing up an heir apparent to a throne, he one day meets successive sights of suffering and misery that stun him by a revelation of the sorrow of earth; and from this shock issues the resolve to give himself to the pursuit of wisdom and holiness. The grandeur of that consecration betrays a right-angle, dividing the life of Gautama, prince of Kapilavastu, from the life of Buddha, the enlightened. It is only the story of Jesus which runs in unbroken continuous development, a straight-lined life of perfect purpose from the cradle to the grave.

Not even the filmy clouds which draw around the greatest of the sons of men, like those thin mists which condense upon the head of the Jungfrau or of Monte Rosa, can veil the pure white brow of Jesus.

There is something still more significant in the absence in the records of Jesus of all traces of any consciousness of faultiness. No shadow of guilt flits across that holy face. He makes no confession of sin, betrays no sense of failure, is never troubled by memories of past offences such as tortured Augustine, or by the fear of falling that shook the mighty soul of Aurelius. We overhear him in prayer, but we catch no whisper of the common burden on the heart of men. His Liturgy knew no Litany, his Psalter no fifty-first psalm.

Only one word of human experience we miss in his lips—*Peccavi*, I have sinned. We hear him confronting the pitiless publicity that blazed upon him all his working life with the calm consciousness of innocence which dared to ask, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

He never seems conscious even of any shortcoming. His ideals, confessedly the highest of all men, never seemed to oppress him. No sigh or groan such as the noblest souls heave escapes him before the Perfection he worshipped.

Now all this is conceivable of a very shallow and ignoble man whose life reaches down to nothing very deep or earnest. Fools see themselves in the light of their own goodness and are happy in the faint warmth they take for life. But his eyes were on the Eternal Ideals of Perfect Goodness. It was their searching sunbeams which shone through him, and in that white light he cast no shadow.

And this imperial consciousness of rectitude clothed him with all naturalness. When men set up to be perfect they become intolerable. But this man is neither haughty nor hard, but simple as a child, sweet as a tender maiden, while he dons the robes of God and they trail not. Nor does any most careless word or deed betray him into a slip. The longest and closest intimacy disillusionizes none of those who followed him. We

owe our image of him not to those who followed him afar off, a century or more removed from him, but to those who knew him personally or knew him through those that had companied with him during his public life. They saw him daily, hourly, through three years, and he stood the test he imposed on himself. Familiarity so far from lessening him magnified him. His disciples began with calling him the Son of Joseph, they ended with saying, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. No man, they say, is a hero to his valet; but here is a man who to his three years' attendants is a God. He never misses step as he strides along in his walk with the Eternal.

"What sayest thou of thyself," as Lacordaire truly notes, is the final appeal in sanity.

We, too, must therefore each of us say, "I find no fault in this man."

II. Perfection, however, is too great to be defined in negatives. We must add to *faultlessness*, *fulness of character*, to get the Ideal Man.

Here rather than in positive faultlessness is where the greater souls of earth seem lacking. Socrates is almost faultless ethically, but notwithstanding his deep reverence and religiousness he does not fill out our ideal of spirituality. Buddha turns away from social life and leave its duties un-lived. Most greatly good men grow only some one class

of virtues. We do not think of looking for symmetric development of the whole character. No phrenologist expects to find an ideally rounded head. Each one has some bumps lacking and some in excess. No physiognomist expects to find all charms of feature combined in one face. A woman will rank as a beauty on the strength of one exceptionally fine feature. Saints are characters in which from natural bias and force of circumstances certain qualities have been forced into unusual development.

Life does not seem sufficient to grow out fully in all directions. The tree grows one limb perfectly, but the other side is dwarfed. Nature has her division of labor in fashioning the soul of humanity, and one man feeds our truthfulness, another our purity, a third our reverence.

The most singular characteristic of Jesus is his lack of characteristics. He is not predominantly any type of character, because all character meets in him. Call the roll of honor of human excellences and see what grace fails to answer in the person of Jesus. Justice, truthfulness, honor, temperance, purity, reverence, courage, courtesy, kindness, sympathy, pity, charity, forgivingness—do they not, with every other illustrious quality, shine forth from that wonderful face? And are they not in full-formed maturity in him? What notable example of any grace of soul that you read in

history can you not match with a word or deed of this Nazarite Carpenter? Open the chronicles of soul-heroes, dear old Plutarch's stories of the ancients, mediæval lives of the saints, the latest biographies of goodness in modern clothes: cull the choicest flowers of nobleness and holiness, and are they richer-hued or sweeter-scented than the simple tales of this Jewish peasant? Each sex finds its ideals in Jesus. He has all noblest manliness, all sweetest grace of womanliness. Every race and age finds its ideal in him. He combines the healthy, happy humanness of the Greek, the intense spiritual aspiration of the Hebrew, the Roman law-abidingness, the Hindoo absorption in God, the Germanic individualism, the Latin sense of a corporate life, the ancient conservatism and the modern spirit of progress.

Though so intense a patriot, we do not think of Jesus as Jewish. He was a cosmopolitan. His face naturalizes itself in every country, in England and China, in America and Russia. The best of every people is sublimated into a bettermost in Jesus. Each saint of earth has some feature of Jesus. The kindly justice, the noble public spirit of Confucius; the hunger for holiness, the self-sacrificing love of Buddha; the thirst for truth, the patient self-command of Socrates—are they not all at the zenith in Jesus? And in this all-sidedness of soul each facet of character is perfectly cut,

rightly proportioned. No virtue is in excess, no grace is defective. With every stop drawn and the whole key-board sounding, there is exquisite harmony. Contradictory qualities in full force balance each other in perfect poise. Who has succeeded in this? Who has loved truth without becoming intolerant, or purity without stiffening into asceticism? Who has worshipped justice without denying charity, or striven for courtesy without blurring veracity? Who has burned with zeal and not smoked in fanaticism, or lived freely in the world and not thawed into laxity? Who has pushed courage out to the full of daring and yet held it from slipping over into rashness, or urging every power to its utmost speed has never broken gait and slipped into a run?

Virtues shade off into vices imperceptibly. Excess of goodness is evil. Around this full-lunged life in intensest action a hair-line zones all virtues and holds unstrained.

Nor does this moderation and comprehensiveness result in any lack of positiveness. When we cease to be specialists we are apt no longer to excel in anything. We know all languages and are masters of none. We draw and play and sing and write, and succeed in all alike indifferently well. Genius does one thing and is immortal; talent does many things and has a paragraph in the obituary column. We would win all the graces

and become mediocrities. We are well rounded, but have no points. We are not extensive and intensive at once. The wonder here is that the most comprehensive of souls is the most positive; the most evenly developed nature is the most forceful; the most symmetric man is the most intensely individual of all men.

He has spread out to full-formed stature and then vitalized it all with full-charged life. Jesus is no colorless abstraction, no indistinct generalization of all the virtues, but a vivid personality casting a very defined shadow.

He is no mosaic of character, no composition of the choice bits of others, leaving an impression of manufacture, but a thoroughly fresh originality. Raphael drew, so it is said, from many famous beauties their special charm to enter into the face of a Madonna. Jesus drew from all peoples their noblest features and sweetest expressions, and the wonder of the living man, as of the painted face, is that it is not a composition but an improvisation.

I think of Jesus as a symphony in character. Through every changing mood the music flows, with every instrument in action, a majestic harmony of the voices of the soul, unmarred by any discord, perfectly proportioned in its balancing parts, moving organically onward round one central *motif*—this matchless sweetness passing from the soul of the master in exact echoes of the whis-

pered strains of the heavenly harmonies heard within, with no changes in the score, an improvization in goodness, and that improvization—a perfect life.

Before the perfect proportions of this majestic man we stand whispering to ourselves, “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!”

Faultlessness, fulness, both I find in the character of Jesus, and therefore I must call him perfect.

I do not claim for Jesus more than he claimed for himself. “Why callest thou me good?” he said to the rich young ruler; “there is none good but one.” The absolute perfection of the Eternal he disclaims; the relative perfection of man he shows, and we adoringly yield him.

III. We have then in our gospel story the one picture in history of a perfect life. Simply as a picture it is precious to the soul. That humanity dreaming through the ages of ideal goodness has once fashioned it artistically perfect is an assurance that there is somewhere a reality in this ideal perfection which haunts our souls. He who stands furthest out in the shadows of doubt must reverence this dream, enshrine it in his heart, follow its commanding voice in his life. But I find myself unable to believe that such a perfect picture is not the copy of as perfect a man. Jesus really lived, we know. He really lived substanti-

ally as we know him. His character is the one thing about him that we can best trust. No hand engaged in copying that face could have altered without injuring it. Talent's botches in restoring genius we know too well in art. What could those Galilean fishermen have done to improve Jesus?

Nor can I credit the marvellous force of the consciousness of the church at large with this miracle of character-art. The reverent, grateful admiration of a people will indeed idealize a great man. We have seen this process at work upon the memory of Abraham Lincoln, till the coarser features of that great nature are even now, within two decades, dropping away and leaving the sublimated soul of our martyred President in the nation's shrine. But this idealizing succeeds by eliminating facts. Its secret is forgetfulness. What if this National Consciousness should essay to write for ages to come his life? It must either omit the shadows and thus leave no relief of individuality or keep them in the background and thus darken his fame. How has the Church Consciousness gone into such detail, photographed Jesus in every attitude and yet presented a faultless, full perfection? Only, we may be sure, because it simply mirrored the fact of a faultless, full perfection in the man before it. What then? Then we must go down very low on our knees before this man who lives our Human Ideals.

Whatever hesitancy we may have in defining our thoughts about him, since we tread on ground where we are not at home, we must pay the homage of profoundest reverence to one who, so thoroughly human, is yet so clearly superhuman, since *humanum est errare*. With Napoleon we may see in this perfection of Jesus the sign of his divinity, with Richter we must say "he is the purest among the mighty and the mightiest among the pure," and with Goethe call him "the Divine Man." We must make him our life-study, and call him with Whittier "The Master of Life." We must with Tennyson softly say :

" Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine."

And though that perfect life dwarfs our sinful, one-sided souls till at times it seems only to crush us, let us not fail to reflect how precious is that flawless character to our aspiring hopes of goodness. It has come into the flesh by no accident. That it has dawned in the face of humanity for one moment is a revelation of the possibilities beneath this common look of man. What though it has died off that face, it leaves still its soft shadow on the flesh it once lighted up with the glory as of the Son of God, and in the heart that unconquer-

able conviction that it was a prophecy of the end of the strange, sad story of sorrow's schooling. We are struggling up into the light. Here perhaps on this earth for our race, in other worlds it may be for you and me, there is a shining more and more unto the perfect day. There is even now at the heart of being a Reality of Living Goodness, which once suffused the soul of Jesus; and so to him we listen hopefully while he whispers to us the secret of life, "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" and with patient step follow on, stumbling, sinning, but striving ever, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

THE DEATH OF JESUS.

“I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me.”
—*John* 12 : 32.

How peculiar is the fascination a sunset exercises over any sensitive soul! After we have allowed for the influence of the beauty, and perhaps accounted for it on the most purely scientific grounds, there remain subtle psychological interactions between the soul of nature and the soul of man, in which lies the inner secret of this charm. Poetry here is a more trustworthy guide than optics. As the little pool upon the sea sands overflows beneath the incoming wave of the great sea, even so the individual fills with emotion beneath the rising of the oversoul.

Nature parables the cycling life of all things each diurnal period, and we seem to be watching the death of the day. Birth and death—these are the epochs of life—with, how often, a dash between, blurred and blotted; these the endless mysteries, the exhaustless fascinations of all imagination.

Sunrise and sunset are its everlasting symbols in the poetry of nature; the fresh upspringing life instinct with hopeful energy, the calm departing life rounding its appointed pathway and going down to sleep; the life issuing from God, with His dewy kiss, the life welcomed back into the everlasting arms and soothed by the gentle touch that wipes all tears from every eye; the pearly gates of heaven opening to let life out, their opening again to draw life in, the glory stealing forth each time; the dawn and the twilight, the earliest myths of The Infinite Divine Presence.

After the day's activity, its glorious lights, its intense warmths, its checkered moods, its clouds and stormfulnesses, we crave a beautiful setting to crown its service and reassure us that the light shining in darkness has not been comprehended—surrounded and swallowed—by the darkness. Against the clouds which mass themselves along the western horizon to overcome the sinking sun let its bright beams strike and make of them watery mirrors to reflect in myriad angles of overpowering brilliance the victory of Light!

Thus—I am not passing from figure to fact, but only from one phase of spiritual reality to another—we linger lovingly and reverently around the death-scene of the great man. We look there to see the essential glory of the life rise in the final flaming up of Light over all the darkness of sorrow

and sin which have struggled with it through the day, and seal itself with victory.

We cherish as our supreme mementoes of the men of whom the world was not worthy, the traditions of their death; and nowhere do we feel God so near as when a great soul drops below the horizon in light!

Let us glance at two immortal soul-settings, and thus reach up to the death of the Master, on either hand of whom, in the East and in the West, these sage and saintly men forever stand.

I.

For forty-five years after entering on his mission Buddha itinerated in the valley of the Ganges, and of that generation and a half we have only confused and legendary accounts; but the mists roll away at sunset, and we have a clear scene of calm and peaceful beauty.

When about eighty years of age, on a journey, he rested for awhile in a grove belonging to his society, and was sickened by some food a disciple named Chunda had prepared for his mid-day meal. Before he reached his destination that afternoon he felt that he was dying. Careful lest Chunda should be reproached, he left a special word for him, assuring him that in hastening his departure he had conferred the greatest benefit

upon him. "There are two gifts which will be blest above all others, namely, Sujātā's gift before I attained wisdom under the Bo tree, and this gift of Chunda's before I enter the final rest of Nirvāna." After halting twice more the little band rested for the last time, not far from the town they were seeking, and there, lying under some *Sal* trees, the master talked long and earnestly with Ananda, his beloved disciple, about his burial, and about the rules to be observed by the society after his death.

Ananda broke down and went aside to weep, but Gautama missed him, and, sending for him, comforted him with the promise of Nirvāna. About midnight a Brahman philosopher came to question him, but declining to discuss minor matters with him he discoursed concerning the central truths of life. "To true wisdom there is only one way, the path that is laid down in my law. Many have already followed it, and, conquering the lust and pride and anger of their own hearts, have become free from ignorance and doubt and wrong belief, have entered the calm state of universal kindliness, and reached Nirvāna even in this life."

Turning to his disciples he said, "When I am passed away and am no longer with you, do not think that the Buddha has left you and is not still in your midst. You have my words, my explanations of the deep things of truth, the laws I have laid down for the society; let them be your guide;

the Buddha has not left you." He spake to them from time to time during the night, and towards the morning once more urged upon them mutual love. "Beloved mendicants, if you revere my memory, love all the disciples as you love me and my doctrines." After another pause he reminded them of the great truth of his mysticism: "Beloved, that which causes life, causes also decay and death. Never forget this; let your minds be filled with this truth. I called you to make it known to you." These were the last words of the greatest religious teacher of the East before Jesus, and shortly afterwards he became unconscious and thus passed away. A beautiful close to a glorious life, in ripe old age, surrounded by friends, with the light of his habitual gentleness and unselfishness and spirituality illumining the souls of his weeping followers. How reverently we pause before that grove by the river-side, over which the first beams of the morning were rising—the new day of "The Light of Asia"!

II.

The actual facts of the life of the greatest ethical teacher of Greece are left in entire vagueness, though we have the richest reports of his wonderful words; but when the evening comes we have a vividly distinct picture, always to live in the reverent memory of man as one of his choicest

legacies. The death of Socrates crowns the grandest life of classic story with the noblest death, save one, that history records. Would that its infinitely beautiful tale were appointed to be read in the calendar of that Church which is the Communion of Saints, in this holy week, where all Holy Living robes itself in Holy Dying, and offers itself in sacrifice around the Perfect Death!

Socrates, after a life consecrated to the inculcation of virtue, spent wholly in the endeavor to inspire the youth of Athens with the love of goodness, by precept and personal example, without thought of remuneration or comfort, finds himself in old age the object of general aversion. His lofty teachings, his incorruptible life, his devotion to the public interests avail not to shield him from the vindictiveness of the shallow, selfish men he has offended in his uncompromising loyalty to truth. The vanity he has wounded, the falseness he has exposed, the injustice he has rebuked, the superstition he has shocked, form an unholy alliance and determine to silence him. He is brought to trial on charges of impiety and of corrupting the youth of the city. The charges are so frivolously false that had he been willing to use his wonderful powers in his own defence he would certainly have turned the bare majority of three which condemned him. But with a high sense of rectitude that felt no need of self-exculpation, with a fine scorn for

the base ingratitude of his city, which would not allow him to supplicate its favor, with a lofty superiority to all fear of death, which left him less concerned for the verdict than the distressed friends around him, with a reverent regard for the Higher Power, which he felt was strangely leading him and which he dared not thwart — he declined to stay his fate. How sublimely pathetic the address he makes before the court! Who can read it, however familiar its well-known words, unmoved? How august the consciousness of a holy mission! “I believe that to this day no greater good has ever happened in the State than my service to the God. For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul.”

How charming the humility that interpreted the eulogy of the oracle which pronounced him “the wisest of men” as a declaration that “He, O men, is the wisest who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing.”

How lofty his fearless fidelity to the right in the face of death! “A man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong. . . . The

difficulty is not in avoiding death but in avoiding unrighteousness."

How reverent his fear of offending against the voice of God within him! "I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this: but necessity was laid upon me—the word of God I thought ought to be considered first. . . .

If this was the condition on which you let me go (that he should stop his teaching) I should reply: Men of Athens, I honor and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you." How magnanimous his bearing towards his accusers and judges! "I am not angry with my condemners or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good, and for this I may gently blame them." How majestically the poor prisoner judges his successful foes! "And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death, and they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villany and wrong." How like the words of the Hebrew singer looking down into the valley of the shadow of death, seeing not clearly through its dense clouds, but fearing not,— "for thou art with me,"—his last public words: "The hour of departure has arrived and we go our ways—I to die and you to live; which is better God only knows."

Remanded to prison, there is a delay of thirty days in the execution of his sentence. During those calm days of waiting his friends are constantly with him, listening to his weighty words. A tempting offer of escape urged upon him he unhesitatingly puts away, in his utter loyalty to the laws, which, even though unjustly, have condemned him, and in the unreserved consecration of his life to the good of men. The fatal day arrives, and his nearest friends assemble at the prison early in the morning to spend the last hours with their venerated Master. How tender, how sublime that scene! The rough prison-room, the uncouth-looking old man, of whom his satirist owned that "as he talks the hearts of all who hear leap up and their tears are poured out," walking up and down the room in pleasurable release from the galling chains that morning stricken off, discoursing, as the hours glide by, on immortality. He goes over all the grounds on which man could warrant his hope of life after death, evidently concerned far more to comfort his friends and followers than to sustain himself, "as a father of whom we were being bereaved and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans;" seeking to buttress by reasoning the faith which in them was dependent on proof but which in him reached down to a profound conviction, beyond his power to formulate, that all was "well." He smilingly replies to

Crito's question as to his burial: "In any way that you like, only you must get hold of me; and take care that I do not walk away from you;" making us think of that great word of Spenser concerning Hope—"She always smyld." He turns these high arguments into solemn motivations to holy living: "Oh, my friends, if the soul is really immortal, what care should be taken of her, not only in respect of the portion of time which is called life, but of eternity: and the danger of neglecting her, from this point of view does it not appear awful?" He recalls the fable of the swan song of prophecy; and out of his conviction that he too is the "consecrated servant of the same God" from whom it was believed to have received the gift of prophecy, that he may not go out of life "less merrily," he summons his prophetic powers and gives to his rapt disciples that marvellous vision of his Father's many-mansioned House, the beautiful country "where everything that grows, trees and flowers and fruits, are fairer than any here"—into which a Christian seer has given us so similar a glimpse. The superhuman grandeur of this far-off scene is made human by the tender touch which shows him resting at times upon a couch, at the side of which the beloved disciple Phædo sat on a stool a little lower than the couch, and, as he tells, the Master "stroked my head and pressed the hair upon my neck—he had a way of playing with my hair."

Thus at length the evening shadows upon the floor tells that the hour has come; when, refusing to wait to the latest moment, after taking his bath and preparing his body for burial, to save others this trouble, while his friends can no longer restrain their tumultuous grief, he receives the cup of poison from the jailer's hand "in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of color or feature," and, after walking calmly about till the poison has taken effect, he lays himself down and "covers his face—uncovering it a moment, forgetful of no least law, to say, "Crito, I owe a cock to Æsculapius; will you remember to pay the debt?" Then, silently as the sun without the prison walls, set the Light of Greece. "Such was the end," writes his disciple, "of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest and justest and best of all the men whom I have ever known;" of whom we, too, may each reverently say, "His mien and his language were so noble and fearless in the hour of death that to me he appeared *blessed*."

III.

Where shall we turn from this divinely beautiful death to see any diviner glory?

History records but one soul-setting which can be seen after this.

A Jewish peasant lived more perfectly than the

Grecian sage and saint, and died more gloriously, in an end recalling his, but only to surpass it.

Jesus of Nazareth, after a three years' life-work which the world owns "the perfect ideal poem," fell a victim to the same injured shallowness, superstition, and selfishness which murdered Socrates. He, too, was tried on false and frivolous charges of blasphemy, and drew by his own lofty dignity upon himself the condemnation which his accusers could not have procured. But for him there was no decorous observance of forms, no respectful and considerate treatment, no month of sunset calm, no peaceful, private death amid sympathizing friends. Every conceivable element of indignity and wrong seemed to pour into the cup pressed to his lips—an outlawry of months, an evening seizure by armed bands, a traitorous betrayal by a chosen disciple, desertion by all his followers, a midnight trial where law was outraged and decency thrown off and gray-haired councillors railed and insulted him, a hasty conclave in the early morn to pass the predetermined sentence, a denial of him by one of his most trusted friends, another trial before the Roman ruler, yet another before the Herodian governor of his native province then in the city, a humiliating mockery of his claims as the judgment with which he was returned to Pilate, a defeat of the Roman's desire to acquit him by the fiendish fury of a

city mob put on by venerable priests and scribes in their utter abandonment to hatred, a choice of an obscure fanatic and murderer for clemency in his place, a wild and vengeful cry for his crucifixion which at last prevailed, a scourging under the Roman knout, a surrender to the humiliating sport of the brutal soldiery, a weary journey to the place of execution, staggering under the rough timbers on which he was to be impaled, an endurance for several hours of the most excruciating of deaths, in the pitiless publicity of the broad day before the city's gates, between two common criminals, while his executioners coolly cast lots beneath his eyes for his clothes, and the passing throng paused to laugh at the throne of "the King of the Jews," and the priests, implacable, insatiate, stood around him mocking his helplessness. The only relief in this unparalleled tragedy is the presence of a few faithful women, with his heart-broken mother and the beloved disciple, who get near enough at last to receive his parting words; and the overshadowing cloud which gathered above him and softly shielded him from the merciless eye of man, and in the darkness, as his great heart broke, restored his spirit to his Father's hand.

Of a broken heart literally died this gentlest, tenderest, most sensitive soul of earth, under an accumulation of suffering and shame which lifts his end out of all parallelism with that immortal death-

scene in Athens; and yet with what fearlessness, alike of men and of death, with what majestic dignity and calm composure, with what immovable patience and magnanimous generosity, with what self-forgetful thoughtfulness for those around him, with what serenest trust in the Heavenly Father, and with what unconquerable sense of victory, he met his end!

His life gathers itself up against the clouds that had so stifled him during the weary afternoon, and pours itself in victorious light over the wrongs that crowd upon the western horizon, making of the dense darkness around him an opaque background for the splendor of the setting of The Light of The World.

The obscurity that veils the life of Jesus lifts at the time of the evening oblation. This sunset-scene of the supreme soul is photographed for all ages in living colors. It hangs in every home, the sacred companion of our holiest hours. The writers of the Gospels rightly judged when they were so careful about every detail of the last days, and gave them such a disproportionate place in the story. We who long to follow in the blessed steps of his most holy life are wisely led by Mother Church day by day of this holy week along his Via Dolorosa.

Shall I catch in the prism of a morning's thought the pure white light of this perfect setting, and

help you to see the separate rays that compose its fulness of glory?

Jesus brought his death upon himself by his uncompromising loyalty to the work God had given him to do. That work called him to teach men the highest ethical life and the purest spiritual religion. These lofty ethics and this pure religion had to be set forth in relief against the dark immoralities and superstitions of the times. He did not hesitate to expose and condemn, now with fine irony, and again with righteous indignation, those corruptions in conduct and creed. He thus shocked prejudices, offended dignities, crossed conventionalities, disregarded traditions, interfered with vested interests, incensed the "unco' guid" on whom he turned his light, provoked the clergy, who, like those in later days of reformation, fattened on the abuses of faith and practice. With a reverent freedom which the professionals of religion could only judge heretical license, he asserted the superiority of man to ordinances by his treatment of the crucial conventionality of the Sabbath. He might have evaded the deadly war this course brought on him, by simply keeping silent concerning abuses and errors, but this was the one thing he could not do.

He felt himself called to lead the people into a new life, and to be indeed the coming one of whom they had been so long in hungry expectation. The

nation was ready to receive him, if he was ready to accommodate himself to the demands of the times, and waiving his first best, the clear ideal of a spiritual leadership, would accept of necessity as a second best the people's ideal of a national leadership, if only as a means to the higher end. But this he insisted on regarding as the temptation of the Evil One, and would not consider for a moment. This persistent refusal to accept the rôle almost thrust upon him embittered the patriots, alienated his followers, induced in all probability his betrayal by Judas as a desperate means of forcing him to the Messiahship. He foresaw it would be even thus, but never wavered in his loyalty to the work he had set out to do. He died because he could not compromise with his convictions even by silence. That was the majesty of his conscience!

Not only did he refuse to shun death; he deliberately sought it under a wholly unparalleled purpose. Down the vista of his life's pathway he early saw the shadows of the cross at its close, and from a date clearly marked to us he turned his face full to that cross, and walked straight towards it with the high resolve to master the time and circumstances of his death, and make it crown his life's great work.

In the spring of A.D. 29 (according to the corrected chronology), when he had been two years

engaged in public teaching, word was brought to Jesus of the execution of John the Baptist. This information caused a crisis in his history.

At the moment he was, to the surface glance, in the very fulness of success. A year's labor in Galilee had given him apparently unbounded influence over his native provincials. He was surrounded by great throngs of people wherever he went. The ardent Galileans were enthusiastic over his beautiful words and wonderful works. He had scarce leisure to eat or sleep.

But he read below the surface. At the end * of his year's work, here and there one discerned dimly that the lofty ethics, the pure spirituality of the teacher were not the preliminaries to his Messiahship, but that Messiahship itself. Even of his chosen and trained followers there was not one who was not expecting him soon to enter upon his real work, announce himself undisguisedly as the nation's leader, claim its throne and restore its freedom and glory. A new nation—not a new religion—was what they expected. A reformed religion, indeed, they looked for, but only the inner revivification of Israel's power. The best of those who followed him were only patriots attending the legitimate King in exile, and waiting for the signal of the rising. In their souls his great words slumbered, the seed-corn of the new life to rise upon the earth, but they could not

sprout till the patriotic hope crusting them in should die, and in its dying feed these inner forces of a world's new life.

The spectre which at the opening of his work had stood athwart his pathway, tempting him, now drew near him threateningly. He saw that events were rapidly forcing on the issue between his spiritual leadership and that national kingship which the people craved, and could not, would not, sever from the other. John could have carried the nation enthusiastically, had he unfurled the flag of freedom. For that the people had waited vainly till the tide turned, and he was left for months unrescued in the prison of Herod, and now met a brutal death, while the busy currents whirled on, forgetful of the man after whom the whole nation had flocked a few months before.

Of him too the fickle people would soon weary when no sign came to rise against the Romans. His foes were restlessly alert to turn them from him. Both the ruling sects were united in the purpose to undermine him, and were using every art of the politician and the Jesuit to turn the people against him. To popularity's ebb he was personally superior, but to its dangers for his work he was not blind. The future of his work lay with his disciples. They were yet unready to bear the chill of a great falling away. Should his life drop a prey to the wiles of the Pharisees, they would not hold to-

gether round his memory and perpetuate his work. Their fluent faith in him needed to be crystallized into fixity and form. The mask of the Political Prince which they *would* hold over his face must be drawn away that they might see the Soul Leader they felt and really loved, and know their work to be to make him known to men. Abruptly stopping in the midst of his intensely active ministry, he led his disciples over the Lake of Galilee, and sought a season of retirement. In this calm communion with his Father he reaches the conclusion that thenceforth rules his course. He sees a violent death the inevitable terminus of his ministry. He accepts his fate—his Father's will. He will not throw his life away, neither will he longer avoid his destiny, except to secure that it shall come wisely and well for his work's sake. He must have time to mature his disciples' growth in his truth. He must then make that inevitable death seal his work in their souls, forever disillusionize them of dreams of national restoration, and fix their hearts in unalterable loyalty to himself and the spirit of his life. The aged Horace said of his son who had fled from outnumbering foes—"he should have died." He who knew so well how to live, knew when and how to die. Not yet awhile, and not in the obscurity of the provinces, but in the publicity of Jerusalem would he meet his Father's will, and make his death do what his

life alone could not do. So "he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem."

This sublime resolve he carries out with masterly wisdom. He devotes himself to the ripening of his disciples. All other work he subordinates to this. He carries them away from the crowd in retreats to lonely regions, and in the longest and most out-of-the-way of his tours. He tests and draws forth their faith in him, as in the memorable scene when he asks, "Whom do men say that I am? . . . but whom do ye say that I am?" He studied assiduously to prepare their minds for the truth they were so slow to grasp, that his outward career was to end in a violent death, but that his true power was then to begin. He labors to inspire them with the spirit which should read in this end the symbol of his life's power, and the sign in which they were to go forth to conquer, calling his slow journey towards Jerusalem the Way of the Cross, and urging all to take up their cross and follow him.

So perfectly did he labor that when the end came the scales dropped away, and they went forth in the power of the sacrificing spirit of their Master to win the world to him.

He executed this purpose to gain time, to ripen his disciples, and to postpone the end till the season he had determined as the most impressive, with an unslumbering prudence. While publicly minister-

ing during a large portion of the time, and feeling secure from arrest when a tumult would follow, he guarded his retirements so carefully that the Council had to offer a reward to informers against him.

Thus in December, at the Feast of Dedication, which commemorated the national deliverance by the Maccabees from the Syrian oppression, he presented himself, as though hoping against hope that they might discern the real cause of their present oppression by the Romans, and turn from political schemes, and follow his lead into deliverance from their sins and corruptions, and thus win new lease of life; but finding them ready indeed for a Judas Maccabeus, but not for a Jesus, and narrowly escaping being stoned, he leaves Jerusalem with his disciples, and goes across the Jordan, and—how human the touch—seeks “the place where John at first baptized,” and where his own mission opened. Again he conceals himself in an obscure town called Ephraim.

These last weeks were evidently times when from hour to hour he could not count on his life. To the very last he continues this masterly care. After the most public appearances he eludes observation, and, though never far from the city, escapes every snare by such watchfulness as we dimly see through the story of the arrangements for the last supper in the midst of his foes and the

stories of his miraculous disappearances. When he has delayed their wiles till the time he had resolved upon as the fittest for the inevitable end, then, though they had concluded to adjourn his arrest over the Passover feast, he forced the traitor's hand by his plain intimation that he knew the plot of Judas, and was arrested and condemned and executed at the very time he had determined.

That this acceptance of such a death was not without exquisite anguish to his sensitive soul we see in many a hint. This is the inner meaning, I think, of the mystic scene on the Galilean mountain-top, when, after a night of communion with his Father, the disciples, waking, overhear him, as it were, talking with spirits from the other world concerning his approaching death, and recognize—so they report—the forms of Elias and Moses through the dim light, and see the Master, radiant and glorified, as though the night's victory in his soul shone through his very body. This is the meaning, too, of that striking scene which St. Mark gives in terse, abrupt, graphic words ; when Jesus, while conversing with his disciples on their way to Jerusalem upon this subject, as though striding suddenly before them and walking rapidly in an agitated manner wholly unusual to him, “went before them ; and they were amazed ; and as they followed they were afraid.” This is certainly part of the meaning, at least, of that most

mysterious scene in the moonlit olive-grove outside Jerusalem, the night of his arrest, when, with his disciples near at hand as though to make him feel not utterly alone, said he to them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch. And he went a little further and fell on the ground; and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee: take this cup from me!" "And his sweat was as drops of blood falling to the ground."

Yet, lest we should for one moment think this weakness, recall the magnificent boldness with which, when he no longer desired to guard his life, he threw himself against the corrupters of religion and morality. With what fearless courage he took in hand the correction of the temple desecration before the very eyes of the priests and surrounded by the men who lived on these abuses! With what directness, in the presence of the people, he charged the clergy with the sin of the nation's apostasy, in those unsparing parables of the last days which none who heard could fail to understand, and which filled the eyes of the Pharisees with wrath and made their fingers burn to seize him! With what matchless courage on Tuesday of this week he closed his discourses with those terrific invectives which, ringing round the marble colonnades of the temple, died away in the great

sob of his loving heart over Jerusalem—his last public words!

How calm the composure with which he meets his disciples in the upper room for the last supper of his little family, with a traitor in their midst, who leaves them, as he well knew, to go for the cohorts that were to arrest him, while he proceeds, serene and undisturbed, in those blessed words of comfort! Immortal scene of perfect peace on the very threshold of the grave! Nor does this calm composure leave him once all through that awful night when he faces man. Alone in the garden he may sink for a moment beneath horrors we can only dimly discern through the shadows of that night; before men he quails never! Deserted by his disciples, bound and standing before his vindictive judges who hold his life in their hands, exposed to their pitiless indignities when the council adjourns in exultant hatred, led in mock state before a rabble court, the centre of the fiendish storm which rose and fell with the fluctuating moods of Pilate, handed over to the coarse and brutal insults which the rough soldiery took for sport, receiving the thrilling sentence, *Ibis ad crucem*, staggering under his cross along the streets of the city in broad day, left impaled upon the cross for three hours amid unfeeling derisive spectators of his ignominy and suffering—no

flush of shame, no pang of pain, betrays him for one moment from that perfect poise of soul!

How majestic the dignity with which this betrayed, forsaken, arrested, condemned man stands forth alike in the council of the Church, the judgment hall of the imperial representative, the palace of the Galilean ruler—so plainly the superior of them all; awing the hard Roman before his helpless captive; foiling every animosity by the silence no power could force him to break; making his chains and thorn-crown and rush sceptre and cast-off toga seem so royal, as Pilate cries derisively, "Behold the man," that the ages go upon their knees!

How perfect the self-control which, after such a night and morning, after hanging on the cross till his fevered hands and the midday sun burned him with thirst, under the excruciating agony which has crazed coarser natures, turned his head away from the opiate draught, to hold his faculties clear to the dreadful end!

How self-forgetful the thoughtfulness for others which in the evening occupies him with strengthening his "little flock," and cheering them against their coming orphan sorrow, and on the cross plans to care for his widowed mother!

How sweet the patient gentleness towards the sleepy disciples, who in his utmost need could not watch with him one hour; to Peter, whom he over-

heard denying him with oaths, and melts with a look; to John, who crept up to his cross, after having forsaken him, and to whom he, without one word of rebuke, commends his beloved mother as his seal of unshaken trust!

How exhaustless the charity which over the men nailing his hands and feet to the gibbet prays, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do;" which responds to the cry of the criminal by his side, but lately reviling him, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise!"

How filial the trustful resignation to his Heavenly Father, which checks the prayer of the shrinking flesh with, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done;" which, after that appalling cry of the sinking life and the horror-stricken soul, when heart and flesh alike were failing him—"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!"—from that cross breathes forth his soul with, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!"

The sun strikes through the great darkness with that word, and all is light. Ah! now we see the full glory of that matchless life! At the time of the evening oblation there is light. A Roman captain witnessing this scene exclaims, "Truly this man was a Son of God." All after-ages comparing this death with the sublime end of the greatest of the Greeks have responded with the exclamation of Rousseau: "Yes, if the life and death of So-

crates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God."

Let us worship him! Worship the perfect goodness which, shining in his life, crowns his death with unutterable glory! Seek with reverent aspiration that perfect life which in this perfect death fixes our human ideals, sacred forever! And oh! ye who this day rise to follow Jesus, ever hearken unto Him who from this Way of the Cross whispers down to you—"If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Ah! thou Crucified, thou wast right.

Lifted up, thou dost draw all unto thee!

THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS.

“He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”—*Heb.*
9 : 26.

As we listened the other day to the noble music of Sebastian Bach, every one must have felt that the genius of the father of modern music had rightly interpreted the story of the passion of Jesus Christ. Those sweet, sad strains which hushed the great assembly were laden from the very heart of this world-tragedy. The exquisite beauty of the patience of Jesus, the sublime heroism of his will, the iris-hued glory of character that lustrously surround this man of sorrow, worshipful as all is, yield not the peculiar pathos which is expressed upon that cross. There is a more mystic hue in the anguish that flushes the face of the crucified Nazarite. We are awed by the sense of a mystery of law under which he is suffering, that dark secret which we vaguely feel everywhere in life, and here see issuing in the person of the supreme man.

The death of Jesus is the summit peak of the most tragic of the laws which we discern ordering

the sentient creation—the law of sacrifice, the ordination that one life shall give itself up for another in order that the life at large may rise.

Here on its summit the law clothes itself in light divine, and is all glorious; but it is only this uppermost zone that is thus illuminated. As it reaches down into the lower strata of being, this law shrouds itself in darkness and glooms with horror. So have I seen a lofty mountain stand, its top serene in light, thick clouds wrapping in impenetrable obscurity its massive sides and shadowing the deep valley at its feet with profoundest night.

We construct law from below, working upward; we interpret law from above, coming downward. Groping in the sunken valleys we must keep our eyes on the blue sky kissing the white brow far up where life is enfolded by God. Thus let us stand to-day beneath the cross of Jesus, wherein this world-wide law reaches out of the awful darkness and swathes itself in light, to interpret the mystery of the sacrifices which lie still in shadow by the clear significance of the death of Him who “appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

I.

Evolution is in some form undoubtedly the method of creation. Man has developed out of

savagery. Institutions, laws, and beliefs the most precious and sacred have developed with him, and have crept up slowly from very dark and dreadful beginnings. Embryonic forms are generally unlovely. If, even in the uppermost height of a Jesus, the law of sacrifice, under which one life dies for another, is so awful, what must it be far down in the lower strata of existence? It must begin on a plane of life where there can be no conscious discernment of it, no purposeful acceptance of it, no transfiguration of its dark suffering from within, and must appear simply as a dreadful doom of destiny denying any beneficent order.

Precisely this is the tragic law which men have long seen as a fact. Life feeds on life everywhere. The leaves of the tree drop and fall and decay upon the ground, and from the death of one year another year draws its sustenance. The animals prey upon each other, and earth is one vast slaughter-house whose groans and moans rise in unpausing chorus of woe. As far back as we can discern we trace the tokens of this reign of terror, and, hardened in the sands that edged the shores of immeasurably ancient seas, we study the tracks of the murderous struggles of gigantic brutes. Life swarms into being as though only to spread the tables for other lives. Fishes swim in shoals to fill the maw of the monsters of the deep.

Unutterably sad as this all appears, the seeming

denial of any overruling Power of Goodness, it is, as the dimmest-sighted must discern, no mere chaos of suffering. Though we be tempted to think the Power no Goodness working in beneficence towards the happiness of life, it clearly is an Order working in wisdom towards the ennoblement of life. This very law proves the condition of improvement. The feebler gives place to the stronger, the lower feeds the higher, the poorer lives in plant and bird and fish and beast yield up their being unto richer lives. Each advancing stage of existence rears itself upon the lower orders preceding it. The higher organisms find their prepared food in the simpler organisms before them. The succulent grasses and the beautiful flowers extract the nutriment of earth and air and vitalize it, and the end of their lovely life is that the sheep may crunch them and the birds suck out their honey. And they in turn appear upon the table of man. Each rank of life draws up into itself the forces of the life beneath it and glorifies it through death. The plant reappears in the animal, and the animal in man. Man, the crown of nature, is possible only as borne up on this law of sacrifice. That he may be, plants and birds and beasts and fishes all must die. A great city like this is an altar for the lower lives, to which we lead them bound and helpless and sacrificially offer them up to the "organic ascent

of life." Everything slaves, suffers, and is sacrificed that being may rise and crown itself with intelligence and character in man.

In all this there is nothing noble.

The zone of light up the mountain-side is not yet reached. The law is not discerned nor accepted. Sometimes, however, as I have watched the dumb sheep and cattle on their way to the city, it has seemed as though in this look of patient submission in their eyes the light of life was gleaming down from above.

II.

Even up on the plane of humanity the law still shrouds itself in darkness, and works its awful way as a blind necessity. Aboriginal races are swept away by the sword, the pestilence, and the famine, that higher races may take their places. The red man dies that the white man may live, planting his cities where the Delaware and the Mohawk camped. Society builds its upper stories of culture and refinement upon sunken foundations of human wretchedness. One class rises into leisure and culture upon the dumb sacrifice of other classes in slavish toil and brutal ignorance. It is easy to see this law in slavery, but it is just as really operative in all society. Far back in history men lived together in communal property, with a seat for every one at Mother Nature's table, and

plenty for all, though super-abundance for none. To reach a higher intellectual life for humanity this law was set at work in the stagnant comfort of this early state by the forces moving back of man. The stronger subordinated the weaker, appropriated their property, enslaved their persons, and on the servile toil of the poor there rose a class freed from the necessity of labor and developing thus the brilliant arts of civilization. Wealth and leisure and culture have always been reared upon a substratum of poverty and toil and ignorance. In our own day of grace, Mr. Thornton tells us that two thirds of England toil to free one third for elegant leisure. Civilization, as we know it, continues to be made possible by this solemn sacrifice of the many for the few. Our social fabric is upborne by human caryatides. We plant our cities upon living piles.

Individual life tells the same story. One dies that another may live; one is sacrificed for the happiness and good of another. This is the secret of tragedy, the mystery which every dramatist, from Æschylus down to Shakespeare, has discerned; the endless fascination of the fiction which holds a mirror to actual life. I recall now the novel in which my eyes opened to see this dark law of life, and vision again the poor blind girl, utterly in love with the hero of the tale, discerning that he loved her not, rising from the side of the two she

felt belonged to each other, pausing a moment by the side of the vessel bounding over the bright, blue waters of the Mediterranean, turning her sightless balls an instant upwards, and then—a plunge, a few uneasy waves, some little bubbles over a life gone out, and a free way opened to the mutual happiness of two other lives.

III.

Precisely this is the trend of all growing life. As being rises it rises not out of this law, but into nobler forms of it wherein it is seen and chosen, and life becomes sacrificial. The mother-hen will wearily search for food for her little brood, will arm her weakness with unwonted courage to defend them, and unshrinkingly lay down her life to save them from the hungry hawk. Then even in this lowly form life takes on sacredness, and the glimmer from the soul above all being shines through the impulse of this mothering love. Dr. Livingstone told us touching tales of simple unhesitating self-sacrifice on the part of mid-African savages to save their friends from the crocodiles, and in them we recognize that barbaric life is creeping up into true humanness upon the august heights where God draws near.

We measure the ascent of life by the way this doubly acting law is made to work, in the enforced sacrifice of the weaker for the stronger, or in the

chosen sacrifice of the stronger for the weaker. One of the Russian novelists tells the tale of a young mother fleeing from the wolves with her children round her in the sleigh, and as the horrible cry of the hungry herd draws close upon her, throwing forth first one and then another of her little ones to stay the dreadful chase, till the panting horses drop in the centre of the village and she is safe. By the side of this we place the well-known story of another Russian mother pursued also by wolves, and leaping forth herself to stay their fierce hunger over her own body till her affrighted little ones were borne securely out of the forest, orphaned but saved by her heroic love. The same law of sacrifice is working in each of these cases, but in the first it is its low and selfish operation by force—the sacrifice of others; in the second it is its high, unselfish action by love—the sacrifice of one's self.

Life, which cannot escape the action of this law in climbing up towards God, reverses that action; and the truly human powers weave the subtle cords with which the nobler men bind themselves for the sacrifice and offer up themselves in love and duty upon “the great world's altar-stairs.” Love is always sacrificial. It gives itself. It cannot keep out of the sorrow, the suffering, and the shame of the loved ones. Under every burden that oppresses them it feels constrained to stoop its shoulders and

lift some part of the crushing load. Every home, every sick-bed, reveals this vicariousness of love, in the patient ministry of wife and mother. Language strangely signs this law in love. We have many words to express our feeling with the pain of another; we have no word to express our feeling with the joy of another. Sympathy, compassion, condolence, are stamped with the seal of this law.

Conscience, too, the very throne of the divine in man, is cruciform. It suffers vicariously as well as personally. It takes up the wrongs and sins of others and carries them in sorrow. It cannot be satisfied if by the good grace of God there be upon it no dark shadows of individual guilt. The shadows of the crimes of society, of the transgressions of relatives and friends, spread over it. Daniel has to go to his knees "praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people." Jeremiah's eyes run down with water for the offences of his nation.

IV.

As life thus reaches the moral plane and liberates these forces which are to carry on this higher evolution of mankind, they carry up this old law of sacrifice to unsuspected heights, where the glory of a light divine plays round it, and a new era opens. For the physical and intellectual de-

velopment of man the lower forces of selfishness use this law in the brute struggle for existence, the stronger bodied, stronger brained sacrificing their weaker fellows for their enrichment and power. For the moral and spiritual development of man the higher forces of unselfishness use the same law in the divine labor of redemption, the stronger souled sacrificing themselves to uplift and save the degraded and the erring, to atone for the sins of society and the state.

This law of sacrifice is the secret of all the redeeming, atoning work wrought by man whereby the ignorance and sin of earth is overcome and humanity moves on upwards towards the light of life.

The young mother shuts the door upon society, gives up all pleasures, and devotes herself to the education of her children, and through this sacrifice there issue the noble men who have blessed the world. Elizabeth Fry, John Howard, Mary Carpenter, John Wesley, Octavia Hill, and a host of men and women who have given up their lives wholly to the contest with some great social sins, have offered the living sacrifices by which England is being redeemed from the wrongs that have cursed her. This is the story of every nation. Thus one after another the wrongs of earth are put away.

The gigantic sin of human bondage that lay

heavily upon our nation parted it at last by the yawning chasm which threatened to rend forever our Republic. The old myth of Quintius Curtius, which we had read in our school-books, loomed up a living, awful fact. This gulf, too, could not close except our bravest and our best leaped into it, freely offering up themselves. Sumter's guns sounded the signal for the bloody sacrifice, and as their echoes died away our fathers, brothers, sons rose up, leaving comfortable homes and goodly prospects, tearing themselves away from tearful parents and sobbing children, from heart-broken wives and maidens still and white as death, and the long line moved forward, month by month, pouring on into this fathomless abyss, till at length over so awful a sacrifice the gaping sides of this yawning chasm closed, burying in it the nation's dreadful wrong and cementing indissolubly in their blood the Union of the States. They have put away our sin by the sacrifice of themselves. The genius of the queen of fiction has given the world no more wonderful revelation of the laws that govern men than the poem-story which illumines in high-wrought hues this mystery of sacrifice. The Spanish Gypsy has a deeper insight into vicarious sacrifice than most theological treatises. The warm heart of a woman sees right into the midst of the mystery when the cold heads of men have beaten the bush all round it. When Fedalma

finds in the Gypsy King her lost father, who summons her shrinking heart to leave the love and life opening so richly before her and help him mould his rabble Zincali into an ordered people; and found their state upon a distant shore, she totters before the altar suddenly rising across her pathway; and after an agonizing struggle, unable to refuse the call that thrills her soul with duty's solemn voice, she writes thus her farewell to him in whom her being centred :

“ My father came.

I am the daughter of the Gypsy chief

Who means to be the saviour of our tribe.

He calls on me to live for his great end.

To live? nay, die for it.”

V.

The supreme sons of men have incarnated this law, and their names are synonyms of it.

All through that divinely beautiful story of the end of Socrates, which I told to you last Sunday, there steals an awed sense that the sacrifice he had offered to the State, in his life's devotion to the highest good of the people, demanded one final self-surrender, unto which the Power above was leading him. Back of all the avowed motives which induce him to refrain from pleading for his life, one sees in that immortal address a feeling of this tragic necessity. This feeling is still clearer

in the "Crito," when he puts away from him the strongly urged escape. In a noble personification he represents The Laws as rebuking him for any such attempt to avoid death; and he must be dim-sighted indeed who does not see above the forms of the State Laws the august shadows of the Eternal Laws, whose constraint was round his soul as cords binding him to an altar. He discerns that to perfect the power of his life and make it the abiding force to goodness it became, he must seal it in a martyr's death; and thus from his people he "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Buddha clearly saw this law, and unhesitatingly left everything in life and made himself a living sacrifice to win for his people a way to holiness and peace. His whole life, from the day he left his palace home in Kapilavastu with his young wife and infant child, was one prolonged offering up of himself. His teachings centred in this truth his life incarnated. He called around him a band of men who lived it after him. Their marvellous success in bringing the East to the feet of their Master lay in the power of this law, lived in the Master in whose name they went forth far and near. The sins of petrified religion and corrupted morality under which the races of the East lay prostrate were largely, for a while, put away by this utter sacrifice of himself, and a new faith and a new life rose up redeeming men.

Not for these loftiest sons of men the eulogy
written upon the splendid Egoism of the great-
brained Goethe:

“ He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear ;
He struck his finger on the place
And said, ‘ Thou ailest here and here.’
He looked on Europe’s dying hour
Of fitful dreams and feverish power
And said, ‘ The end is everywhere.
Art still has truth, take refuge there.’
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and *far below*
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of trouble and insane distress
And headlong fate, be happiness.”

The highest life of man most perfectly lived the law of sacrifice. The public life of Jesus was one continued sacrifice. From his lovely mountain home he came down among the busy throngs of men to labor in a ministry of utter self-abnegation. His work was day after day to pour himself out into others’ lives, hour by hour to stoop under the burdens of sickness, sorrow, sin, and shame that were crushing his brothers and lift them from their bodies and their souls by taking them on his own all-sympathizing heart—a sheer lift of love almighty. St. Matthew pictures one of these days of merciful ministry that so drained his life out from him, and writes beneath the scene the

words "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness." This is the evangelist's interpretation of that vision of the greatest of the prophets, wherein musing in the light of the exile in Chaldæa over the destiny of the Righteous Servant of God, the nation and the nation's Personal Head—since every nation tends to head itself in one supremely representative man, the quintessence of its life—he saw, amid the shadows, the form of a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, taking upon himself the sorrows and sins of men and thus taking them away, out of their hearts and from between their souls and God; making his soul an offering for sin, and led thus as a lamb to the slaughter, opening not his mouth. Plato had seen the shadow of this inevitable experience of the highest man, picturing the perfectly just man as seeming to the people unjust and evil, and as meeting the doom that he shall be "scourged, racked, and bound . . . and at last, after suffering every kind of evil, he will be impaled." Thus it behooved Christ to suffer because he was the Just One, the Righteous Servant of the Lord. He early felt the necessity for the final sacrifice, and saw the altar at the end of his pathway. Overbeck painted the Boy Christ upon the cross with the inscription, *Dolor meus in conspectu meo semper*—My grief is always in my sight. He

carried his cross long before the April morning when he tottered along the streets of Jerusalem beneath its heavy burden. When the time came he walked straight to the end he felt his Father had ordained for him; drawn by this mystic necessity laid upon him; silent because of this 'needs must be;' completing and perpetuating for ever the power of his life in the power of his death—and thus "he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"; the perfect life doing perfectly for the full-orbed world that which imperfect lives had done imperfectly for segments of the world.

Hawthorne tells the mystic legend of the elixir of life that was to find its chief ingredient in the flower grown out of a grave. That is the symbol of humanity's life, fed from the flower whose roots run down into the garden-grave of Jerusalem.

VI.

This perfect obedience which Jesus learned, he mastered as discerning the nature of the necessity laid upon him. In the heights on which he walked light was upon this necessity, and he saw it to be the action of a law of life. Law was to his clear sight not the incomprehensible 'needs must be' of some unknown Power, the dark doom of a hard Fate, but the will of a Heavenly Father: his will because also the law of his own being. To him belong fully those words in which

all sacrifice was interpreted of old. "Sacrifice and offerings" (such as the priests made) "thou didst not desire . . . then said I, Lo, I come. I delight to do thy will, O my God ; yea, thy law is within my heart." It was in the heart of the Son because it was in the heart of the Father. Jesus unshrinkingly welcomed the sacrifice he saw enthroned in the very life of the Eternal God.

Overpowering is the thought, but how can we escape it? God carries this law within himself. It shadows us on earth because it lives above in heaven. Creation is a travail, a long labor of Nature to bring forth the Divine Thought ; a travail whose throes and groans we feel and hear in the agitations and agonies of existence. Providence shows a Mind and Heart entering livingly into all earth's troubles and lifting men above them by shouldering upon a Higher Intelligence and Love the labors and responsibilities of nations and of classes : "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them ; in his love and pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." God in the spirit of man is heard in the groans of sacrifice : "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." The Eternal Heart loves, and the Perfect Love is

perfectly vicarious, when its children sicken, sin, and suffer, saving them by the sacrifice that only God can make. We, too, trace dimly, with unutterable awe, the vision of the seer—"In the midst of the throne stood a lamb, as it had been slain;" "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Thus we climb up through the story of life, always upon the mountain-flanks of this stupendous law; at first buried in bewildering darkness, where no light glorifies the dumb and helpless suffering in which life offers itself for life, but reaching slowly towards the light till in the zones where walk the lofty souls of earth we feel the warmth of the sun striking through the clouds still round us, and on the topmost dome where Jesus stands alone the Sun bursts through all mists and we are in the light! The law transfigures itself in him, and we see it in the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. "He appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

VII.

Standing reverently to day with our eyes upon this perfect sacrifice, we can in his light see light.

(1) We can see why the church has insisted so strenuously upon the fact of the sacrifice of Christ.

She has felt through the shadows the presence of a great law she might not dare to slip, by whose outworking sin is put away. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." That law reaches round the circle of being. Every step of advancing life is won under it. So when the supreme Son of Man comes forth from God to perfect all the redeeming work that holy love has ever wrought upon the earth, he achieves this crowning effort of salvation only by obeying this same law. He offers his life unreservedly to the work God has given him to do and seals the oblation of himself upon the altar-cross. The perfect sacrifice of the perfect life becomes thus the power of God unto salvation. From that cross the forgiveness of God shines down into our consciences, and the energy of God streams in upon our wills; and sinful souls find peace and life as they stand before this altar and hearken to that whisper from above—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Humanity has felt through eighteen centuries a force issuing from that cross which has been slowly taking away the sins of society, redeeming men from ignorance and disease and vice and crime, doing away with the curse that has lain upon the world and opening visions of a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

We should miss the central fact of the central

life of man were we not to say, "once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

(2) It is one thing, however, to realize a fact, to affirm a law, and quite another to explain the fact, to interpret the law. The fact of this law all history witnesses, the philosophy of this law no wisdom of man yet writes. Who can explain the secret workings of any law, the simplest and the plainest? What have our scientists told us that shows us the why and the how of the laws of the physical world? Who then is to tell us the secrets of the higher laws of the spiritual nature, and explore for us the mysteries of this ordination under which life must yield itself for life, and the sins of earth can only be put away as the nobler lives freely offer themselves up to the service of their fellows, and the supreme Son of Man completes this altar ministry by the sacrifice of himself?

We must think about this fact and try to fashion some theory of the law which so vitally affects us, even as men have always done; but we must also remember that our interpretations of this law can only be the shadows cast upon our understandings by the transcendent mystery above us. We will not be so proud, therefore, as to fancy that we have adequately expressed this high law of soul when the wisest of our students are confessing that the

lowest law of body, utterly transcends their comprehension.

We will not venture the unutterable folly of limiting the blessed action of this law of sacrifice in Jesus Christ by the more or less ignorant notions men offer to themselves in explanation of the saving power they feel in the Cross of Calvary; any more than we would shut up the energizing influences of the sun to those whose theory of optics is orthodoxly scientific. We will ask of men not what their doctrines about this sacrifice of Jesus are, but what is their realization of its power upon their lives.

(3) Nor, in the recognition of the natural and historic character of the law of sacrifice which I have sought to indicate to you to-day, will we commit that other serious error so commonly made in men's thinking over this great mystery.

When we see this law climbing up through the ascending stages of life till it bursts forth into new and heavenly life in Jesus Christ, we will not surely try to interpret the full-fledged law by its early, embryonic forms, or fetch along from far-past times the cast-off bodies this vital principle of Sacrifice has grown around it, in institutions and beliefs, and seek to house in them the glorified soul of truth. The sense of sacrifice, as the central law of redemption out of evil, has been in the heart of all religions, because it was in the heart of all races.

But the forms it has assumed have been fashioned by the measure of man's inner ethical life and the nature of man's outer natural life. It has grown through savagery and barbarism, and civilization, taking form and color from the ignorance and superstition and selfishness and cruelty of man in every age. Men have sought to sacrifice—everything but themselves; have offered all precious things of field and flock and house to save themselves from the Powers above; feeling blindly the necessity of sacrifice, but interpreting it selfishly as a necessity of self-preservation. Far down the mountain-side they were enwrapped in the thick clouds and the great horror. We cannot recall the “bloody shambles” of heathenism, to clothe with their outgrown savageries, and superstitions our thought of that august law which stands forth in the light in Jesus Christ. It is natural and right for those who stand beneath that light to turn back and trace the slow growth of the spiritual idea of sacrifice through those pagan ages, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has done for the highest heathenism, the priestly religion of Israel; to note how in the lowest forms of sacrifice the law was felt; to see how gradually under the guidance of the spirit of truth and holiness the law clarified itself, and men beheld in the altar sacrifices object-lessons illustrating in outward symbols the true sacrifice to be offered in their

own lives; to trace how these sacrificial systems led slowly on to Him in whom the law was fulfilled and sacrifice forever spiritualized; but we will, with the author of the letter to the Hebrews, read the early and lower shapes of sacrifice by turning upon them the light of its final glorified form, and not think to see the law aright by turning the Cross of Calvary to the smoky flames of the altar-fires of Greek or Jewish paganism.

So, too, with the growth of life and thought that has followed Jesus Christ. This life-law of sacrifice incarnated in him has had to follow the old slow development, though mightily quickened from him. The mental and moral status of mankind has fashioned the institutions and ideas which have grown round this sacrifice of Christ, trying to house it upon earth.

Materialistic ages have encrusted the spirit of sacrifice in Jesus with the splendid superstitions of the Mass. Reverencing the feelings that led to this Christian paganism, we must utterly discard the notion in which that sacrifice is imprisoned. Scholastic ages ran the fluent fact of sacrifice into the only mould of law known to them, the forms of the juridical system, and left the dogma which gave us this mysterious law in terms of legal science. We must always honor the majesty of law, human and social, and admire the skill with which an Anselm used the matchless forms of

Roman jurisprudence to represent the mystery of the law of sacrifice. This will not blind us, however, to the defects inherent in the application of the technical and cumbrous provisions of imperfect juridical law to the perfect government of God; and especially to the ethical danger involved in the idea of substitution in the penalties of wrongdoing. So good a Puritan as Oliver Cromwell discerned the wrong of such a substitution when, as George Fox, then in prison, tells in his journal, a friend came to the Protector and "offered himself body for body to lie in Doomsdale in my stead if he would take him and let me have liberty. Which thing so struck him that he said to his great men and council, 'Which of you would do as much for me, if I were in the same condition?' And though he did not accept of the friend's offer, but said he could not do it, *for that it was contrary to law*, yet the truth came mightily over him."

The will to sacrifice himself in Jesus thus comes mightily over us all, though we may not credit him with an action contrary to even human law; unless indeed we simply mean that in him God the Eternal Ruler is substituting *himself*, to touch our hearts while outwardly complying with the law, as in the beautiful story of Mr. Bronson Alcott Joseph Cook has told, where the school-teacher voluntarily administers to himself the punishment incurred by a rebellious pupil, and thus

melts his heart and draws him by love to seek obedience. But we find escape from the perplexities of the legal nomenclature in the fact that advancing life retires the conception of juridical law behind the conception of natural law. Our later and fuller idea of law is that of a principle, not a code; a method of vital action, not a system of decreed statutes.

The law the jurist frames is only the expression of the law stamped upon the conscience. We recast the notion of a law of heavenly jurisprudence into the conception of a law of divine nature, and the difficulties that have perplexed us drop away.

(4) That this connects the sacrifice of Jesus with the lower sacrifices of men and nature, so far from being a defect is an all-important element of this law of sacrifice.

If that cross of Christ stood out alone, dis severed from all the other sacrifices of history, what light would it shed on them? They would remain dark, baffling anomalies in a divine order. But if in the heart of that divine order there is a law of sacrifice which holds even over God, then when God bursts forth in the flesh, the sacrifice in which we see the divine man is the interpretation of every lower self-abnegation, even of the dark sufferings of the brutal life where the weak die for the strong in the immolations of a seemingly cruel Nature.

Light streams from the mountain-top down into the deepest valley. We see something of the meaning of it all. Life is bound by one law throughout every sphere, and that which in the lower plane advances existence so tragically, prepares even thus the way for the reversed action of the same law in the higher orders of being, where, climbing up into the life of God, like God man turns to save the suffering, and puts away sin "by the sacrifice of himself."

The difference between the sacrifice of Jesus and that of other holy men is not one of kind. Each sacrificial life puts away some bit of sin. All are imperfect, and so limited by time and space. They are all completed in the one "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

The beams of every feeblest star are present in the light and warmth of the sunshine which is the fulness of the heaven's glory.

Thus we remember not to go away from this cross, thinking that this perfect sacrifice dispenses with your imperfect sacrifice and mine. It is to inspire you and me with its own spirit, and lead us all to the fulfilment of that law in which the redemption begun in Christ and perfected in its power is to be outworked in a humanity born again unto God.

"For their sakes," said the Master, "I sanctify

myself, that they also may be sanctified." So let us say with his disciples, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." So I bid you "rejoice inasmuch as ye are made partakers of Christ's sufferings," and urge you into the spirit of that great word of St. Paul; "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and *fill up that which is behind of the afflictions* of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." Yea, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice."

MacDonald represents Robert Falconer in his intense consecration to the salvation of his father as dreaming that should his father slip his rescuing hold in this life, he, when called to the joys above, would present himself at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and in the name of Him at whose feast they were gathered call upon all who were there, redeemed by the blood of Christ, to rise and taste no joy of heaven till they had gone down to the regions of the lost and toiled for their salvation!

Need we wait for the opportunities and needs of a future life?

St. Camillus founded in the sixteenth century an order devoted to the ministration upon those afflicted with incurable diseases, whom he named *Cruciferi*, Cross-Bearers. Shall we join that larger

order of *Cruciferi* who, in the manifold works of human redemption, are the true followers of Jesus? Shall we each of us say to-day beneath this cross of Him who hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, "I am now ready to be offered"?

THE CONTINUED LIFE OF JESUS.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—*Matthew* 28 : 18-20.

IN the crypt of one of the churches of Rome lies in cold white marble the form of the dead Christ. Is this the symbol of Christianity? Does the Christian Church entomb a dead Jesus? Is its splendid structure a mausoleum? Are the hosts that pour into the churches to-day seeking, like the Crusaders, the Holy Sepulchre, the shrine that guards the memory of a life that was? Or is Jesus of Nazareth alive still upon the earth, moving yet among men?

Jesus clearly expected such a continued life upon the earth. He surrendered the bodily life to win the free life of the Spirit. In the calm confidence of this immortality among men he walked straight to his cross. The corn of wheat lay down to die, looking for this upspringing life in full power and abiding presence through the long summer day.

Every one believes in some continued life after death. Death does not end all, even on the low-

est and most purely natural view of life. Into the ever-living body of Man the soul of every man passes, as a spirit-atom of the Soul growing within Humanity. Thought is immortal, truth never dies, heroism is indestructible, saintliness breathes on thousands of years after death; and you and I feel to-day the continued life of men and women who have passed away in the far back ages of history. Into that continued life in man Jesus has certainly entered, with a vital forcefulness which makes him far more truly alive than hosts of men who are in the body with us, and so by courtesy said to be in "the land of the living." The true land of the living is the realm of the Spirit. Spirit is in its very nature immortal. This immortality is secured to Jesus beyond all other men. He is thus to-day the highest force of Western civilization, the most intensely living power in society. His Spirit breathes still in his gracious words, and moves within us in the stirrings of our hearts in human love and aspiration after God. Well may we exclaim, with one who sees clearly at least this much, as we turn from the cross on which Jesus dies—"A thousand times more alive, a thousand times more beloved, since thy death" . . . Thou art the "complete conqueror of death." *

But the continued life into which all true men pass through death, upon which Jesus has su-

* Renan, "Life of Jesus," p. 357.

premely entered, is something more than this, unless the oldest, deepest, holiest instincts and intuitions of man have been playing him false. The conscious being whose essential vitality is not in the body with which life clothes itself, but in the formative force fashioning this material vesture, lives on in persistent identity of energy. This we believe, despite of all the seeming denials of sense, with an all-mastering insistence which is nothing less than sublime. Into this continued life of the spiritual being, which emerges from the human chrysalis, we should believe Jesus had entered if there were nothing told us. But there is something told us—something which is as wholly unique as the story of his life before death. Others have been represented as escaping death, or as rising to life from death, and have been pictured gloriously mounting into heaven. But of no other life, so far as I know, has the daring attempt been made to project it beyond the grave and yet keep it upon the earth awhile, in a renewal of the old relations ; photographing it in incidents which should establish the unchanged individuality, while adjusting it to the changed conditions of a higher and more spiritual state. The attempt itself is significant ; its success is the most surprising fact in the story of Jesus.

It is a perfect picture of the glorified after-life, an artistic marvel. It presents the same man in

every characteristic feature, down into details so fine that we miss them until the students' glasses enlarge them, while it accomplishes an unparalleled idealizing of our conceptions of the higher life awaiting man. For a brief period this continued life appears in intermittent visions, and then passes behind the same impenetrable veil that shuts off all the rest of the human family who have passed away.

Jesus is the one man of earth whose life naturally develops this after-math. The supreme character, the highest teacher, the central historical personage, claiming always a peculiar relation to man—in him, surely, if anywhere, life may let forth somewhat of its secret, enough to lighten the shadows under which we sadly walk. When this after-glow of the life of Jesus pales down, and the night settles upon our earth, we may follow the Sun below the horizon, and see him in our mental visionings shining still on other regions of existence, the light of life.

What if these two phases of continued life should be but one, and the glorified Jesus, henceforth ever the Christ of God, shining now in other worlds on other beings, were still, in the long Arctic night of his apparent absence, shining on us here from mirroring orbs, the moon and the stars which he has ordained, the church and the social worlds which illumine earthly existence; and the light of

life crescent over earth, growing upon man, resolving itself under our spiritual spectroscopes into the very substance of the influence of Jesus, were none other than the "solar energy" of this Sun of Righteousness, the continued life of Him whose "goings forth are as the morning"?

This was the vision that closed that after-glow of the Galilean, and left upon the disciples a shadowy presence of their Master ever thenceforth haunting earth, and His old voice whispering in their ears, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . . Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the ends of the world"; the vision whose final flushing the seer beheld long years on, when, so real appeared the words he heard, he "turned to see the voice that spake with" him, and saw—the Son of Man walking among the golden candlesticks.

I believe the history of these eighteen centuries to be the verification of these visions, the manifestation of a Living Christ.

I.

The reality of this continued life of Jesus has been the secret of the lives of his followers in all ages.

That Jesus who when in the body always found his chief work in the hearts of particular men and women, has in the spirit continued there to live and move and have his being.

One who knew not Jesus after the flesh wrote, as the secret of his wonderful life, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Unnumbered myriads of souls have told the same tale. They have found in the inmost recesses of their souls a holy presence; they have felt back of will and conscience a holy power, working to the overcoming of every evil; and when that presence, acting in this power, has shone through the flesh, the light of the eye and the sweetness of the voice have betrayed the inner spirit, and the Jesus who lived of old has been evidently set forth among men. The true churches of Jesus are the Christly men and women round you. The host is borne about in fleshly shrines.

This continued life of Jesus is the secret of the organic life of the society bodying about his spirit. He who in the flesh drew around him a company of disciples, whom he unified and vitalized by his presence and power, when in the spirit began to draw around him a society, a larger body, instinct with his power and presence, of which he was still the life, the soul.

"An institution is the lengthened shadow of a man," says Emerson; but let us rather say it is the true body of a man. In it his spirit continues to live. Were the gases and earths and minerals that composed the fleshly thing John Wesley called his body as truly that body as the great

society which a century from the day we say he died continues to glow with the presence of that earnest soul, to work with the energy of his mighty power? How wonderful the vitality of this body of Jesus: how real, therefore, the animating presence of his spirit! Bodies political and social, of intensest forcefulness and most cunning organization, have decayed and died; cities, nations, empires have grown old, and, overcome with years, have crept into their graves; while this body, growing ever round the Spirit of Jesus, has lived on upon the force of Him who died, as our histories tell us, on the 7th day of April, A.D. 30.

Enfeebled and diseased the social body of Jesus has often been, seemingly at times effete and utterly corrupt; but there has been a vitality in it nothing has sufficed to overcome. Its soul has never died. Jesus has lived on as the clear mind and the resolute will in some paralyzed body, and from within and above the head has sent forth revivifying influences, sloughing off the scarf skin of dead dogmas and corrupt ceremonialisms, quickening the stagnant blood and purifying its disorders, till we may well believe Christianity immortal, and look to see it, at the end of eighteen centuries, renew its youth and verify the words, "Behold, I am alive for evermore."

Thus has he lived on among men in this ever-renewing organism, speaking as of old his gracious

words, healing the souls of the sin-sick, working miracles greater far than the wonders of the Galilean day.

“Time is the great enemy,” said a famous diplomat; but time has been unable wholly to corrupt and fatally to sicken the body of the Christ who survives the generations, outlives the centuries, and grows young in face beneath the wool-white hair of the Ancient of Days. The central rite of the Society of Jesus is the simple, solemn sign of this real presence and energizing power. The incarnation of Christ is the oncoming life in the Church of Him who “was and is and is to come.”

II.

But with this we are all familiar. I want specially to remind you to-day of the fact of the most real and indisputable power and presence of the Spirit of Jesus in the larger life of the great world. He could never have thought of shutting up his life within any narrow circle of humanity's rich being. No church, moving on its own little orbit within the concentric circles of the busy life of man, was his dream of the orb he should inhabit, but a church-world which should push out its sweeping lines on every side, till they should enclose all rounding pathways of the social heavens. The kingdom he foresaw was a new Humanity, within whose growing body he should sit,

the life and soul thereof. Can we see the soul of Jesus shining through the eyes of Man to-day? Can we catch the rays of the starry spheres of our social heavens, and on analyzing them find the presence of the unseen Sun?

(1.) The modern State reflects the presence and power of Jesus. The characteristic movement of our political life is undoubtedly its steadfast trend towards democracy. We recognize the fact, but fail to discern its significance. This modern democracy differs radically from the classic republicanism. The Grecian State was the government of a class, by a class, for a class. The citizens were equal in their political life, but the citizens were only a fraction of the population. A vast helot host slaved in the menial tasks without dreaming of their rights, and without waking in the mind of the most liberal philosopher or reformer a thought of their unspoken claims.

Plato's ideal republic was the city of the cultured few supported upon the uncultured many, no more to be called to the agora than the cattle from their sheds. Our modern democracy takes every man by the hand because he is a man—by and by it will take the woman because she also is a man—and clothes him with the kingly power of government. It knows no distinction of class or condition or race, as it will know none of sex, but seeks the government of the people, by the people

for the people. Whence comes this, but from the working of that soul of free, equal human rights, which, however smothered by kings and priests and aristocrats of blood or purse, still throbs in the society which first in history dared set up a commonwealth wherein no caste should sever men, no privilege distinguish men; where rich and poor should sit down at one board as brethren, and the workingman vote with the nobleman for the officers of their common organization, and be equally eligible with him to its highest places. The Christian Republic has been the inspiration of democracy. The kingdom of the Carpenter's Son has enfranchised all men. His Spirit stirs still in our enthusiasm for human rights.

In the action of the State, as in its constitution, the same expression is making itself felt. Law is seeking impartial, universal justice. It is no longer caring only for the great, the rich, the fortunate few; it is spreading its ægis over the feeble, the poor, the unfortunate many. The history of legislation shows a steady extension of governmental watch and ward over the dependent classes, regulating trade and manufactures, looking after the rights of women and children, caring for all sorts and conditions of men. It is waging the war of Sir Artegall against every form of injustice.

Law is growing mild. It dare not cease to wield the thunderbolts; but it hurls them more

sparingly, and is content that the bolt shall strike, without rolling the thunder to scare before it slays. Torturing punishments, once the common penalty of light offences, are passing wholly away, and from the necessary severe judgments on grave offences all elements of cruelty are disappearing. We treat criminals now at their execution with a gentle consideration which would have amazed classic civilization. This impartial, universal justice, this sweet mildness, is indeed the outcome of the general humanizing tendency we call the progress of civilization; but this itself, experienced in no other civilization, is the influence of the soul breathing within the modern State the righteous, humane spirit of Jesus the Christ.

The interaction of States shows an equally significant movement. In olden times state lines drew the limits of brotherly feeling, and the outside barbarian received the contempt and hatred which kept the world in chronic war until some overmastering empire brought in peace by the obliteration of nationalities. Plato bestows his encomium on the Athenians in that, beyond the other Greeks, they had shown towards Persia "a pure and heartfelt hatred of the foreign nature." Europe does not seem to show any such improvement on this chronic war of the ancient times as to lead us to search for a new force working in society. Nations armed to the teeth, ready to

spring on each other at the first favorable opportunity—peace merely the sponging-off interludes between the rounds of these big bullies—surely this appears a bitter mockery of that heavenly song which heralded the coming of One who was to bring peace on earth, good-will among men! But this condition of things exists because the governing classes of Europe are still essentially Pagan, baptized barbarians. They are condemned by the ideals of the religion they profess. In the heart of our civilization there is rising an ardent desire for peace between the nations of the earth, a noble aspiration after some true brotherly relations among the members of the great earth-family which is voicing its protest against the barbarism of war, and is prophesying a better order of abiding international comity.

And while many forces blend in animating this great purpose of the people the innermost force, however unconscious of it men may be, is the soul the peace-loving Jesus has breathed within our world. It is his power and his presence we feel in the Christianizing of the State.

(2.) Modern Society reflects the same light of life. Following upon the revolt against political injustice and inhumanity comes logically the protest against the inequities—*i.e.*, iniquities, of our existing social order—the manifold mass of wrongs which have come down to us from pre-

ceding ages. It may seem to those who view it superficially only another form of the old selfishness, a struggle of the poor to wrest a larger share of the good things of life from the rich. There is naturally plenty of this sort of enthusiasm in it, but its true forces rise from far deeper sources. No one can examine impartially the writings of the men who directly feed this movement without perceiving that they draw their inspiration from the deep Castalian springs. Prudhon, whose name is the synonym in conservative ears of anarchic agitation, closes his first memoir on "What is Property?" with a sublime prayer, which opens thus: "O God of liberty! God of equality! Thou who didst place in my heart the sentiment of justice before my reason could comprehend it, hear my ardent prayer. . . . Perish my memory, and let humanity be free!"

This pure and ardent yearning after justice is the fire burning in the soul of social reform. It hungers and thirsts after righteousness. It aims at drawing in actual laws a constitution of "The Republic," whose other title shall be "Concerning Justice." Its Social State may be a Utopia, a far-off Ideal, but it is none other than the city coming down out of heaven from God. It is the brightness of this vision that glows on the face it turns to earth. Therefore it is calling to its ranks so many of the young and cultured, whose hearts still

glow with enthusiasm and whose minds are clarified from the heart's pure feeling to see through the sophisms of a selfish society.

Whence is all this unselfish ardor against injustice, this lofty aspiration for a nobler order? Its deep springs are far down in the constitution of man; but the fount that has opened wide the secret sources and pours them fresh and free and full through human life is "a man called Jesus." He lived the very ideals of the nobler Socialism, drawing in from the wrongful order, forcing no violent and immature reconstruction of society, but calling round him a company of men who voluntarily poured their means into one general purse and contentedly lived as brothers a divinely beautiful "life in common." He laid the basic law for his society in the Golden Rule, sure that when once really accepted as the fundamental law of life nothing but a new social order, a kingdom of heaven on earth, could rear thereon its superstructure. And he was right. Whenever men have simply and honestly tried to live his law they have crystallized into some pattern of a life in common and drawn together as brothers. In every age of revived Christian life a spontaneous effort has shown itself in the direction of that first beautiful crystallization of the Christian social forces when "all that believed were together and had all things common; and sold their possessions

and goods and parted them to all as every man had need."

These social ideals which so stir in the growing heart of man are the shadows cast by Him who walked the lanes of Galilee so many years ago, who walks still the inner chambers of the soul of man. Denied by the Church, it is no wonder that he is disowned by the world in this social stir; but never does the thrilling cry go up—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," but that they who hearken well may hear the echoes of the voice of Jesus sounding through the soul and say again, "There standeth one among you whom ye know not." The Carpenter's Son is at his old work, preaching his glad tidings to the poor.

This social movement narrows itself within the lines of no one reform. It is the sunny sea sweeping in along the whole coast line of custom and of law, surging up to higher life all round the social shores. Woman's traditionary limits are overflowing, childhood's life is being tided up to nobler levels, the unfortunates of every race and creed and class and color whom the ebbing waters of selfishness have left stranded on the shore are being borne by the incoming flood of love up where the grasses green and the soft shadows welcome unto rest and shelter. And the fountains of this sea open from the eternal heart of the Christ within humanity. This freshening

force of human love which so characterizes our age finds its very name at the hands of the disciples who have baptized man into the new life of 'Philanthropy' which is the living spirit of Jesus.

(3.) The Educational movement of our modern world is another very significant bit of evidence as to the continued life of Jesus. Every philanthropic task is leading back to this solvent of all ills. Education is no new recipe for the imperfections of man. Indeed its best essays were of old in classic civilization. But the characteristic features of our modern endeavors cannot be traced directly to those sources.

We are urging education upon all. It is no longer held the privilege of a class, but the right of every one. The State of old restricted its care, in the theories at least of its wisest men, to the nurture of the well-born. Our education carries its beneficent boon to nature's most disinherited child, and the offspring of the poorest, the most degraded, are gathered into our People's Schools. Not even the hopelessness of the prison waifs and the helplessness of the deaf mutes and the idiots deter our faith.

We are no longer satisfied with partial education, but demand the nurture of the whole being, body, mind and soul; the manifold man in all his multiform relations to nature and society; a really integral culture. And this whole-orbed culture

is increasingly seeking, as the only flowering in which there is fruitage and the seeding down of the future, character's crown of being. Not even the splendor of a Goethe can convince us that anything short of conduct is the end of education. Matthew Arnold voices the conviction of the truest liberalism in education. Conduct *is* three fourths of life, and therefore the Grecian culture of knowledge is less important to mankind than the Hebrew culture of righteousness. Not knowledge but wisdom, not intellect but soul, not culture but character is the fruitioning of our labors. To mould the whole nature of all into the full formed manhood, which shall use all its powers in loyalty to the laws of God, is our ideal.

And this new education is moulding a modern method which is an offence to the older pedagogy, and "to the Greeks folly." Wisdom is entering the nursery and taking her seat by the little ones, to begin all highest culture in laughing, playing, and singing with them. It is ripening the mind from the heart, filling the affections with sunny happiness, expectant that the force which is warmth in the feelings shall turn to light in the thoughts. It is everywhere ceasing to be mechanical and becoming vital, distrusting systems and trusting life.

Whence again springs all this? I do not forget that the trickling streams of this wisdom rose far

up the hills of time, back of the very beginnings of Christianity. Believing that all streams of human life well up from one central source beneath humanity, I could not but expect to find bubblings of these truths in other regions and from other fountain-heads than our own. But none the less must I recognize the fact that our own modern wisdom of education rises directly and flows continuously out of the life which appeared in Galilee eighteen centuries ago, and has followed man always to these far-off days. Jesus sent his disciples to teach all nations, and our latest zeal for education is only the natural issue of the influence of this greatest of teachers; our newest principles and methods only the long overlooked truths of his full wisdom. His all-embracing love, his reverence for the whole nature of man, his concern for goodness as the alone true issue of life, his holding up of childhood as the mirror of God, his own fresh, natural methods with his pupils—is it not hence that unconsciously to ourselves we draw our inspiration? He himself is the real ideal of our new education. The life of God rising to the full in a peasant's son of a provincial hamlet of an uncultured country in a degraded age, unschooled in books, untaught of men, out of a happy, holy childhood—this is the vision in which our dreams of education lift themselves upon us: a vision not back into the past alone, but down be-

low the surface of the present, where within the development of humanity rises still the life of the perfect man. Every child now betrays through his eyes the Christ within; and therefore we toil with all, reverent of all, trusting the life which in all flows up direct from God, through his "holy child Jesus." As the world begins in earnest to teach, it hears that voice of old, "Lo, I am with you alway."

(4.) The *Æsthetic* life of our age is one of its most remarkable activities. In a period utterly prosaic in apparel, unpicturesque in surroundings, unromantic in spirit, we have a rich development of the imagination. Poetry, fiction, painting, music have witnessed wholly new and glorious unfoldings. This of itself, without inquiring into the features of this new art, implies the opening of some deep inner fountain of the beautiful within the soul of man that I know not where to find unless it be in the one fact which, as it could be historically shown, has chiefly vitalized European imagination, and has run down its rootlets into the profoundest of fascinations. The infinitely touching story of Jesus, the awed recognition in him of the presence in the flesh of the Eternal, marks an epoch in the history of the imagination. The good naturally clothes itself in the beautiful, and the holiness of Jesus has risen over man as the perfect loveliness, fertilizing the sense of beauty in his soul. When

the blessed Mary bore within her bosom the life of her divine Son, her soul sweetened into song and holiness blossomed into art.

I know that there is on the surface of society a fashionable æsthetics which glows only with the phosphorescent brilliance of corruption. It is a backwater of the river of life, where round and round among decaying things in darkness a little eddy circles, mistaking its fevered swirls for progress and its putrescent sheen for light. Elsewhere are we to look for the deep waters which are reaching forward towards the sea with the sun's soft kiss upon their waves. It is a beauty "rythmic with the truth" that I discern in the art which glows with health.

It concerns itself with the common things of every-day life. Born in the temple, it makes its shrine in the home. Fashioning first the gods, it is now studying our children and our friends. It no longer needs to go to the Alps and the Andes; it presents us with a bit of the brook that flows by the old farm and a clump of weeds growing by the roadside. It finds beauty in a wrinkled old woman tending her apple-stand and grace in a street boy tossing pennies. It sings of the Humble-bee and the Rhodora, and fills our ears with the Songs of Labor. The daily round of life is thus ennobled, its pettiness looms large, and the prose of simple tasks is made "by duty epical."

Our eyes open to see a soul of beauty in things common. All life grows sacred and divine, and holding a "flower of the crannied wall" in our hands, we stand before the eternal mystery of being, and worship God.

Art no longer stays upstairs in the drawing-room moving to the rustle of silks and satins. Low life interests it. *Genre* yields the touch of nature which makes the world akin. Dickens studies the wharf life of London, and draws us to the little waifs and runts of being whom it was not nice of old to mention. Life thus softens and sweetens, classes reach out hands, and charity smiles in our eyes as we turn from the water-color and lay down the novel.

Art cannot escape the philanthropy which is in the soul of man. It must help reform and join battle with the wrongs of earth. It sounds the blast against human bondage, and armies march to the music of a poet's words. It weaves a story round some social sham, and the novelist's paragraphs are the sentence of the judge pronouncing its doom. It turns the light on the hollowness of fashion, and the shallowest worldling is ashamed of his Vanity Fair.

Art is fascinated now before the mystery of character. In its laws it finds the secret of tragedy. It preaches better sermons than the pulpit, filling our souls with awe before the Sinai

that looms back of Romola, and melting our hearts in love before the Calvary which shines through Robert Falconer. It robes itself in priestly white to offer the lays of a Tennyson, an Arnold, and a Browning before the august forms of Purity and Goodness.

Art is spiritualizing life till all things grow luminous with soul. Thus it turns to nature with a delight distinctively modern, and develops for the first time landscape painting. It studies every phase of light, every mood of ocean, every passing form of cloud with a reverent love strangely contrasting with the ancient pleasure in nature. Then men joyed in the keen life of field and sea with a zest born of the body. Now the soul of man feels through the mask of nature to its soul. Shelley could not have been developed in any other period. With what a tender, gentle, lowly love Ruskin drew among his sketches that little bunch of grasses. There is a new spirit come from somewhere into man.

Art is aspiring after the infinite. Once it was satisfied with rightly measured and perfectly proportioned beauty. Its ideals were realizable. They rose in stone in those temples which were the very expression of the bounded earthly life of Greece. Its heaven was no higher than the top of Olympus; its gods a foot or two larger than men. Its ideal life was a healthy, happy humanness.

The satisfied delight in which we stand before the Madeleine vanishes beneath Cologne Minster. Every art here combines to stir a vague unrest.

The cathedral is thus the type of Christian art. It is a sculptured sigh, the yearnings of the soul thrown upon stone. Before the temple we enjoy ourselves, beneath the cathedral we aspire after what the old Hindoo would have called The Self.

The sense of imperfection felt in our best work, so far from being a defect is the sign of a new era.

Earth no longer pleases because heaven shines above. We are haunted by thoughts too big for us to grasp. Our ideals are so large we cannot hope to win them. Our best is shadowed by a better. Man is no longer a comfortable, splendid animal, but a very uncomfortable soul struggling with a body. Why else has sculpture so failed, except not merely that we do not see the human form as of old, but that we do see the human soul as they never did of old, and cannot get that on stone?

Of all this distinctively modern art, music is the highest expression. It turns every word to song, and clothes with melody every passing phase of life. It tunes all tasks to sweetness and chords every tie into harmony. Our churches thrill with its worship and our peoples with its patriotism. It is the very voice of the soul, the inarticulate utter

ance of thoughts and feelings too subtle to be worded, too intense to bear in silence. It opens chambers of the being no other charm unlocks, and leads us where we else should have no clue. It is a cry out into the all-encompassing mystery. It is an aspiration after the infinite, heaving the soul up after the Eternal Perfection.

Does not Art betray in these characteristics the lineaments of the new soul born within humanity in Bethlehem of Judæa?

There has lived a man who breathed into humanity a sense of sacredness in all life, and made men thrill with awe to feel God near in common things; who out of every selfish isolation drew the hearts of men into sympathy, and bound mankind together as the children of one Heavenly Father; who lifted over men a revelation of achieved goodness which dwarfed the loftiest life while drawing all resistlessly, as the seas yearn upwards to the moon, after his perfect holiness; who canopied every pettiest existence with the thought of God, and opened down the narrowest pathway a vista of Eternity; who touched the soul of man that it cannot more go fast asleep, but with wide-opened eyes now walks the earth beneath the encompassing presence of the Infinite, the Divine. Centuries have passed and his power has failed not. Why but that his presence ceases not upon the earth, his light shines back from the

world of art, his Spirit stirs within the soul of man the rhythm of this beauty; but that the inner springs which feed this freshening imagination well up from the unfailing life of Jesus the Christ?

III.

Around the germ-cell of the new humanity, the Church, there is thus growing a vast social organism instinct with the life of Jesus, its living soul the Spirit of Christ. From every orb in the social heavens there is shining a lustre that resolves itself into the very elements of the Light of Life which set over Judæa eighteen centuries ago, whereby we know that the Sun of Righteousness is shining still. Must we not believe that in a world of spirits clothed upon with flesh, a Spirit unclothed of the flesh, the Spirit of the Son of Man, lives, teaches, rules, and that the inner secret of the Christly soul growing within man, the hidden source of the Christly light streaming upon man, is the Living Christ?

This Easter morning holds then not only that clue to our personal existence in other worlds on which we usually dwell, but the sublime secret of this present wonderful world. It is an order which is slowly progressing towards a true Humanity, because the Spirit of Jesus is guiding it into all truth, and breathing within it ever higher power, sweeter life; a real kingdom over which the Son

of Man reigns; civilization a true Christendom or realm of Christ. Here too is the solace and salvation of your own personal life upon this earth over which you go stumbling so blindly, feeling so often in these dark days that "they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," when he walketh by you as you cry out after him! "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or, Who shall descend into the deep?" (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead). "For lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Ah, dear friends, in the light of this continued life of Jesus amongst us, the simple, venerable words of the Church grow awfully real. Still is it often true that "the Master is come and calleth for thee," and still in the most actual of spirit acts may we rise and "come to Jesus." Our Christian life is still the veritable obedience to that call of the Spirit of Christ, "Follow me."

" No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;

" But warm, sweet, tender even yet,
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

“ The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

“ O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.

“ Our thoughts lie open to thy sight,
And naked to thy glance;
Our secret sins are in the light
Of thy pure countenance.

“ Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given:
To turn aside from thee is hell,
To walk with thee is heaven!”



THE CHARACTER OF JESUS—THE CHRIST OF GOD.

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
—MATT. XVI. 13-16.

JESUS CHRIST is the focal point of the Church's questionings. The press teems with books and pamphlets answering, in one way and another, that query which Jesus put to his disciples, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? He is a fact Science cannot pass by while it pauses wonderingly over the megatherium and the ichthyosaur. His footprints on the sands of time are of more importance than the fossil tracks of the Connecticut valley.

He is a force in history that must be accounted for; a personage too commanding to be disposed of in an appendix to the Story of Man.

Man holds the secret of all earthly life; each higher man interpreting the lower; till, in the per-

son of the loftiest of the sons of men, we stand awed before the problem of being, worked out to its highest power. Jesus Christ thus forces himself upon a pure naturalism, as the profoundest fact of a true science.

We, who have been tenderly reared in a faith that centres in him, recognize clearly that if we can hold fast the substance of The Christ we hold the essence of the faith of our fathers, whatever the outer changes may be. We see, as plainly, that if we lose our hold of him we have slipped our moorings, and are out on the deep currents which set towards Agnosticism. We dare to say to-day that man can *know* something of God, chiefly because our glimmering intuitions are illumined and verified by the consciousness of an elder brother, who could look down from his sunlit heights on us and say,—“O Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee.”

Men have thought, many a time, that the form of The Christ was evanishing in some new light breaking over the world; but it has shaped itself afresh, after each illumination, somewhat more human, much more real, and yet none the less worshipful.

The white light of our age is bringing a change over the face of our Christ, which fills our souls at times with dismay; and, with intense straining

of the eyes, men are studying the story of Jesus, repeating each to himself, beneath his breath, the Master's question—But whom sayest thou that I am?

However our faiths may transcend scientific verification in their upper reaches, they must lay their foundations in the sphere of facts, and form thus a part of our scientific knowledge. Can we find a scientific substratum for our faith of The Christ?

Through the whole of this winter I have drawn your thoughts to Studies in the Life of Jesus. My aim has been to turn the light of that blessed life upon our lives, knowing, from my own experience, that there is no power for personal holiness comparable with the sweet persuasiveness of the appeal that the story of Jesus makes to the human conscience. Below this purpose I have had another design. I have sought to help myself and you to see, through the mists rising to-day from our overheated world, the Face which for eighteen centuries has inspired and guided men; to discern that it is not dissipated, but merely clouded by the fogs, and that it only awaits the change of mental and moral atmosphere which must recur in the future, as in the past, to shine forth once more the Light of Life for man on earth.

I have felt that, without raising the superhuman aspects of the story of Jesus, there remained the

fact of a veritable human being, who—studied as any other great man would be, in his antecedents, his actual attainments of character, his relations to posterity—discloses a life prepared for by all the previous growth of humanity, realizing the noblest ethical ideals of all mankind, imaging thus the vision of God seen dimly over all races by their highest souls, feeding as a fountain-head the ages that have followed him, holding before mankind, in its most rapid progress, the pattern of character towards which it aspires for its ultimate perfection, and reverently approaches as unto the revelation of God; a man so ideally human as to be naturally divine, and to draw from us the confession of Peter—Thou art the Anointed One, the Son of the living God.

The vision of perfect character which I trace historically among all races, as the high ideal of their loftiest aspiration, which I mark slowly working its way out into the lives of the noblest men of every people, I see realized in one man, who has thus become the inspiration of all succeeding ages, from whom that spirit is steadily spreading over the face of mankind. That Character I must believe the divine conception of man, growing to maturity, and history I must regard as its natural evolution through the embryonic period, hastened to birth in one man, of whom I must therefore say, Thou art the Christ.

This faith in the Christ would be inviolable by criticism, because it would go down below all disputable matters, and would ground the divineness of Jesus upon his true humanness. This faith, too, would re-tone our religious thinking, sickened to-day by the malaria of doubt; for it would rehabilitate all natural evolution with its true supernatural character, and in the history of man would find a revelation of God. I have accordingly passed by, of deliberate intent, such portions of the story of Jesus as the miraculous conception; and in such other aspects of that story as the miracles and the after-life, I have kept to the ground which experience and the universal religious consciousness of man testify to be truly human capacities; in order that we might see how entirely the real wonderfulness of Jesus inheres in that which no criticism can touch, the fact of the character of the historical saint and sage who lived and taught eighteen centuries ago in Galilee, and keystoneed humanity's progress in himself.

Theologians and ecclesiastics have done all they could to evanish the real Jesus in a mist of superstitious wonder. Historical Criticism is to restore that Jesus, and to reveal him, under the severest scientific verification, The Christ; the man annointed by the Divine Spirit as the Prophet, Priest, and King of the new Humanity.

We have had a Gnosis of Jesus, a false know-

ledge, mingling myth and legend with fact; and this must pass away, to enable man to see how infinitely more wonderful, infinitely more divine, is the simple story of the Man of Nazareth.

Such a restoration of the true Christ will proceed along the lines I have tried to follow this winter. It will dig down among the antecedents of Jesus, to find his rootings in history, and to discover the forces of human life which were working together in his race and in the larger life of man, towards one Ideal of Character, and were culminating in his age the evolution of *some* Christ.

It will sift severely the story of the Nazarene to find that what is left of winnowed fact constitutes him, indubitably, the realization of this Human Ideal, *a* Christ of God.

It will then study the influence of Jesus upon his posterity, to realize afresh how truly there is growing in Humanity a Spirit begotten of him; which in its future glorious birth into the true Man, walking earth as the Son of God, is to be *The* Christ, the Eternal Thought of Man in God.

Let me focus in two concluding sermons these broken lines of thought.

I.

History shows an unmistakable growth of the Christly Character in the ancient world, a yearning upward towards one Human Ideal in which God, the Father of man, should Image himself.

(1) Israel was clearly growing this character all through its development. This fact is discerned and appreciated by the churches, but in a very crude manner. Our theologies are full of the Christology of the Old Testament; and from Sunday-schools up to divinity schools—not always a great stride—the instruction of the churches bases itself on this study of the growth of Christ through Hebrew history. But the representation of this development obscures and distorts the real wonder of the fact. Children and theologues are taught to see in the books of the Old Testament a revelation from God, equi-divine from beginning to end; a perfect system of truth concerning the problems of life and thought; which anticipates, in its earliest edition, at the hand of Moses, the ethical and theological disclosures of the latest prophets. The Bible being thus all of a piece, the nation writing it has no real growth towards truth such as goes on among other peoples. The preparation for the Christ consists—not in a natural reaching up of reason, conscience, affections, and will, towards an ever-nobler ideal of human life, under the educative and disciplinary experience of successive generations; not in a gradual clearing away of the darkness from man's soul, and a shaping over it of the vision of God; not in any natural and rational and conceivable development, like unto that declared to be God's order by

its usualness in history ; but in a wholly superhuman and unnatural process, to which no counterpart can be found elsewhere.

Miraculous utterances of prediction, and miraculous interpositions of Providence, are read into the traditions of the national records. Rites and institutions common to all peoples are injected with premature and impossible significances. The words of the people's literature are violently wrenched into undesigned and groundless references to the events of after-centuries. And thus the woodenish and utterly unhistoric system of our popular Christology is manufactured.

This puerile system has run to seed, in almost inconceivable follies ; wherein a well-known Scotch divine finds a Messianic meaning in each verse of every psalm ; a learned bishop of the English Church sees in the minutest details of the earliest worship of the semi-civilized Hebrew tribes, exhaustless hints of spiritual significances, concerning the person and work of Jesus ; and a young and eloquent bishop of our own church gives, in a favorite sermon, a dissertation upon the typical nature of the scarlet cord by which, upon the eve of the Hebrew invasion, over the walls of an obscure town in Canaan, a woman of doubtful repute let down certain suspected spies who were visiting her ! No wonder that from such criticism, run mad in superhumanness, the world is revolt-

ing to-day ; and that thoughtful men are disposed to reject the whole notion of a Providential preparation for some Christ in Hebrew history.

A rational criticism, all the more reverent because rational, is recovering, however, for the faith of the future the dishonored reality of Jewish Christology. Made ready by such absurdities, such contradictions of all we are taught elsewhere of God's method of educating the human race, to waive the whole mechanism of miraculousness in the history of Israel, and to study the literature of the Jews as we study the literature of any other people, we are discerning a most plain and palpable growth of the Christly Character through a natural development of Hebrew history.

No most orthodox theory of the Old Testament prophecy of Christ is half so impressive as the disclosure our modern critical and rational schools are yielding us. Now that every book is receiving a thorough critical re-examination and reconstruction, and so much that was formerly, upon vague tradition, accredited to Moses is seen falling into its true place, far later on in the national story, we behold a gradual growth, out of savage and sensual codes of conduct, and crude and rude imagings of the Power above, towards the magnificently simple, pure, and lofty ethics and theology of the great prophets. The immortal words of Micah and Isaiah, sacredly familiar

to us all, fill us with a new awe, as we see in them the long travail of a nation towards the light of life; and in that dawn of day behold the disc of the Sun of Righteousness, which rose at last full-orbed over the Judæan hills.

Our children will see, as we have never done, positive as fact, unquestionable as history, a vital, organic growth of this wonderful people towards the Christly Character; a truly Providential preparation for some man in whom the Human Ideal, imaging God, should look through the face of flesh, "mystic, wonderful."

This evolution of the soul of Israel ceased not where we have been used to limit its unfoldings, with the age of Malachi; but continued on, through the stormy times of the Maccabees, at the hands of scribe and rabbi and patriot, till in Hillel, the great teacher just prior to Jesus, we find almost literal anticipations of some of the immortal words of the Master; and from the pages of the Jewish liturgies we gather the very phrases which crystallized in the matchless prayer in which the spirit of the Son of man found perfect voice.

(2) Outside of Israel, where we were taught to find only gross darkness, we are discovering the growth, in humanity at large, of the same Human Ideal, with its Imaging of God. One and the same Light of Life is seen struggling through the clouds

over man, towards the day which dawned above Israel.

The unity of the human race is proved, not by the venerable Hebro-Chaldaic legends of Adam and Eve, but by the true revelation which is in every discovery of philology, anthropology, sociology, and history; the unveiling, by all students of man, of the same forces and laws working everywhere, under the modifications of the varying external conditions of man. The same appetites, passions, aspirations, hopes, and faiths emerge in every people, in the parallel stages of development.

Poetries, philosophies, arts, architectures, polities, and social systems reproduce the same forms and contents, in the same order. It used to puzzle the traveller to find this correspondence in widely severed peoples. They could not account for the architecture of Egypt in Peru, the rites and customs of the Catholic Church among the monks of Thibet. Pious Jesuit missionaries thought the devil had been caricaturing the holy church. The explanation is—the unity of man.

Religion draws its vitality from springs deep hidden beneath every soil. Awe, gratitude, adoration, hope, trust, love—these are soul senses of man, as man. God, the soul, the life to come, sin, forgiveness—these are voicings of the human spirit in every tongue. Everywhere the course of ascendant life runs in the same trend of thought, and

cuts for itself the same channels of institutions and codes ; always, of course, modified by local forces. Sacrifices, priesthoods, temples, rituals, purifications, symbolisms, lead up towards "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Sacred Books found in east and west that authority which the soul of man grows to feel in itself, the true oracle of God. A science of Comparative Religion is possible, because, while there are many religions, there is only one Religion, in various stages of development : a field for comparison, not contrast.

Ethics, in which religion culminates everywhere, are, at heart, one and the same the wide world over ; though moralities, the codes of custom imperfectly formulating these principles, may seriously differ. The ideals of manly nobleness and womanly excellence change, among different peoples, only as refracted on the local atmosphere. Truth, honesty, purity, unselfishness, are exotics on no soil of earth. They are native to all climes. Homer's characters educate our American boys. Shakespeare's heroes and heroines can be dressed in the clothes of any people, and will seem at home. The decalogue was given, not from Sinai alone, but from every mount of higher life whence a people's laws came down. Ours is only the Jewish translation of the Human Code.

There has been little borrowing or stealing, in all this correspondence; as our forefathers sagely thought. Pythagoras did not crib from Moses on the sly, nor did Plato go to school, between terms, at Jerusalem. Extricate the essence of religion from the enswathing envelope of dogma and institution; disengage the substance of ethics from the body of codes and customs in which it has grown; and religion and ethics are everywhere one. One Divine Reality everywhere shadows itself in the one Human Ideal visioned by the soul of man.

This light of life shining everywhere has been as plainly a light "coming on into the world;" growing, clearing, rising towards an orb'd centre and source of day. There is an endeavor for a progressive evolution of religion and ethics in all peoples. In each there is an orderly development up to its zenith, and then the light sinks towards the night, and, too often, gross darkness covers the people.

This oncoming light, as it swells unto its blossoming, rounds into one form of perfect life. Pluck the flowering of any race, and it exhales one aroma, the breath of one spirit. One Face seems growing upon the manhood of every people, the mask of one Life back of man.

Practical, prosaic China—with little action of the imagination, with no glow upon the soul, unable therefore to rise to the vision of spiritual reali-

ties or to burn with the ardor of impassioned aspiration, having little sense of God or immortality—out of its cold moralities evolved an ideal of character which shaped the very counterpart of the ethical masterpiece of Jesus, the golden rule.

“In the highest path are four things,” said Confucius, “unto which I have not attained; to serve my father as I would have my son serve me, my prince as I would require my minister to serve me, my elder brother as I would wish my younger brother to serve me, and to act towards a friend as I would have him act towards me.” (Johnson’s *China*, p. 603.)

Persia wrought out an intensely spiritual and ethical religion. There are two antipodal Powers working through existence, the Power of Good and the Power of Evil, Light and Darkness, Ormuzd and Ahriman. All life is one battle-field of these contending Forces, on lower or higher planes. Around man the battle centres. The secret of his story lies in his attitude towards this struggle; as he throws the forces of his will upon the side of the good drawing him up, and rises with it into the Divine Goodness; or upon the side of the evil dragging him down, and sinks with it into the devilish badness. Moral wrong is the core of all disorder. Sin is the supreme evil. Salvation, in a holy hereafter, the blessed destiny made possible by the helpfulness of God. This

Good and Righteous Being is to be worshipped, not in temples made with hands, through the medium of priesthoods, in rituals of bloody sacrifices, but within the soul, in reverent aspiration for His own life of goodness. The present duality is not to endure, but will at last disappear, when death and hell shall be swallowed up in victory and God shall be all in all.

This close correspondence between the thought of Persia and "the truth as it is in Jesus," reaching even to minute details, conserved and fed a spirit so strikingly akin to "the mind which was in Jesus" as to make the beautiful tradition of the wise men from the east, coming to worship the infant son of Mary, a poetic flash of nature truer far than fact. The soul of Persia yearned up after the Christly Character that was its very ideal.

Turn now to that sweet flower of India which was only the slowly ripened fruit of the venerable religion with which it is so often contrasted, as though it were some alien graft. All that was vital in Brahmanism came forth purified, rejuvenated in the primitive Buddhism, the Hindoo Reformation. We are not yet able clearly to interpret the speculative rootings of Buddhism, but its ethical bloom is unmistakably Christian. Gautama's voice was that of Paul and Luther; the voice of the conscience of man, confessing its sin, crying out after righteousness and winning a peace of God, whence

its words issued with the sweet, commanding calm of Jesus himself. The soul of India, pressing through all creeds and codes after the character which is their true substance, rounds into a face so like the spirit of our Master that we are at first startled; and only slowly grow to recognize, with joy and thankfulness, that it is none other than a faint, early proof of the Christ, the one Human Ideal, in which God is ever imaging his Eternal Righteousness. We read in the Four-fold Path, the primitive gospel of Saky-Muni :

“Not to commit any sin; to do good and to purify one’s mind—that is the teaching of the awakened. . . . Not nakedness, not plaited hair, not fasting, not sitting motionless can purify a mortal who has not overcome desires. . . . Cast out the love of self, like an autumn lotos with thy hand; cherish the road of peace.” (Dhammapada, §§ 145, 248.)

We involuntarily recall the familiar words in which are expressed the secret of Jesus, and perceive that there is one spirit in the holy Indian and the divine Jew. Day by day still, amid all the corruptions of later ages, the Buddhist’s matin bell is saluted by saintly souls with the invocation, “May it sound through the whole world, and may every living soul gain release and find eternal peace in God.” Is not this the very topmost height of the love of Christ?

Greece tells the same story. Plato is the high-water mark of the Grecian spirit, and when we look forth upon life from the mountain-tops to which he floats us, we seem to be standing on the mount where the Galilean opened his mouth and taught of God and man. So close is this affinity that quite naturally, in the Providential development of thought, Plato became the real master of Christian philosophy. The gospel called by the name of St. John has given the philosophy on which Christendom has reared its doctrine of Christ, and that gospel is the interpretation of the Son of man by the wisdom of the Sage of Greece. Our later criticism shows the gradual growth of this philosophy, through the New Testament Epistles, from its germ-thoughts in Paul until it dominated the churches and crystallized the doctrine of The Christ. Orthodox theology was fathered in the Academy of Athens. Our zealous revivalists preach the dogma whose mould was there fashioned, under the craft of the Spirit of Truth, as the fit body for the faith of Jesus; the doctrine of the Christ to enswathe the soul of Character coming forth from God into man.

So, naturally, the spirit of Greece, in its blossoming life, grew out towards the Christly Character. Socrates, "the consecrated servant of God," could say, " . . . I consider how I shall present my soul whole and undefiled before

the Judge in that day." (Gorgias, § 526 : Jowett.)

" . . . I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul." (Apology, § 30.) That is the very voice of the spirit of serious, holy, all-loving and saving life, which afterwards found a perfect expression in the Nazarite. All through Plato there is growing, with occasional curious twist, a Human Ideal which, to him who can look close enough, is the Grecian cast of the Character which everywhere was swelling towards some Christ.

The light of life everywhere resolves itself into one Light, ever coming on towards the day. The progress of every people is towards one Human Ideal, imaging God.

And this light seeks everywhere to orb itself and become,

" Not a vain and cold ideal,
Not a poet's dream alone ;
But a presence warm and real,
Seen and felt and known."

This Character struggles to body itself in a Man. In the greater peoples a supremely great man, clothes their highest ideals, and grows towards some Christ.

How Sakya Muni lived the Christly Character

every one now, thank God, knows, even through the mist of legend there told as fact, in the beautiful poem of Edwin Arnold. How Socrates lived this same Christly Character every one ought to know, from the sacred story his disciple has told of his Apology before his judges. How even in imperial Rome the sweetest of her poets lived somewhat of this Character—pure amid the luxurious license of a court, unworldly amid the artificial civilization of the world's metropolis, tender towards the weak and down-trodden in the land of brute force, unselfish amid the selfishness which was eating out all patriotism, loftily longing for "a higher life than the daily one"—we might discern if we had not been so hopelessly drilled in Virgil in our school-days.

In a very real sense, therefore—the onward-pointing hints of Nature's own evolution—history prophesied a realization of the Character visioned in humanity's yearning upward to its mysterious source.

So closely did this swelling bud of natural prophecy outline the form of the Christly Character that, in Plato's famous description of the Righteous Man, it shaped the very features of the outer story of the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who was despised and rejected; and gave us a Grecian fifty-third of Isaiah.

But the Face looking through Humanity never

broke into the flesh fully. The proof of the visioned Character always blurred somewhere. The bud flawed in flowering. The orb clouded as it was crescent. The Man did not come who should body the Human Ideal and image God. The yearning of the human soul after an ideal goodness, in which, it felt, should be the authoritative answer to the Intellect's conception of a good and righteous God, remained an intense hope.

“I dare say that you, Socrates, feel, as I do, how very hard, or almost impossible, is the attainment of any certainty about questions such as these, in the present life. And yet I should deem him a coward who did not prove what is said about them to the uttermost, or whose heart failed him before he had examined them on every side. For he should persevere until he has achieved one of two things: either he should discover or learn the truth about them; or, if this is impossible, I would have him take the best and most irrefragable of human notions, and let this be the raft upon which he sails through life—not without risk, as I admit, if he cannot find some word of God which will more surely and safely carry him. (Phædo, § 85.)

“We must wait for one, be he a god or inspired man, to instruct us in our duties and to take away the darkness from our eyes.”

What are we to say, in the most candid criticism, but that here is Nature's own evolution of the

Human Ideal in which was to be the revelation of a Father God?

I cannot escape the conviction that this unity of light among all men, pressing on towards one full-orbed life, was the evolution of the conception of character begotten of God in man, the gradual realization of the Ideal of Humanity existing before creation in the Divine Being, and destined somewhere, at some time, to find some Word, some clothing form of perfect manhood, of whom we should have to say, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

II.

If this be so, then this natural evolution through the ages should find a natural completion in an age bringing the long gestation to a perfect birth. Humanity, pregnant with the Human Ideal conceived in it of God, will have its travail hour, when in labor of spirit it shall give birth to the only-begotten Son, the Perfect Character, the Christ.

As a matter of fact, such an age did come once, a wholly unique period in the history of man.

The real centre of the earth is the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. There the East and the West, Asia and Europe, the old and the new, the past and the future, meet. The real centre of history is the epoch when the Roman Empire was

growing upon the ruins of the Republic, and sucking up, through its wide-spread roots, the life of the ancient civilizations, hastening everywhere to decay. In that region, in that age, the old world was a-dying, and a new world was visibly coming to the birth.

The ancient civilizations showed the signs of death on every venerable form of life, in political institutions and social systems, in arts and literatures, in religion and morality. The withering tassels and the whitening husks told of the exhaustion of the forces of the old body, in preparing the seed for a new era. The most vital of all peoples had entered upon the decadence whose story is the Decline and Fall of Rome. The brilliance of the Augustan age was the flamboyance which in society, as in art, signs the zenith of power and the westering slope towards some dark ages. Civic pride was lost in party strife. The commonwealth was broken into private interests. Public men had sunk into politicians. The service of the state was prostituted to the lust of wealth. The provinces were drained to fill the coffers of absentee patricians. Law was corrupt. Venality cankered all pursuits. Marriage was dishonored. Women laughed as they passed the statue of Modesty. Men were counted pure who stopped short of beastly vices no longer namable. Roman and Jewish critics make the same diag-

nosis; satirist and historian and apostle draw the same dark picture.

As was Rome, so was the world. Every people was hopelessly decadent. Egypt, Persia, Syria, Greece, were alike moribund. The highest sphere of life was the most utterly dead. The old religions were followed by the masses with a superstitiousness that stirred no noble aspiration and restrained no brutal appetite. They were rejected by the cultured classes with a contempt which passed them by in silent indifference, or with an hostility which covered them with merciless ridicule. The old Roman deification of the virtues, Honor, Purity, Truth, Justice, had become meaningless to the age which saw in these lofty Ideals only phantasms, exciting verdant youths, fresh from the country, with sentimental yearnings after some lunar life. Froude says:

“The old religions were dead from the Pillars of Hercules to the Euphrates and the Nile, and the principles on which human society was constituted were dead also.” (Cæsar: Intro.)

Yet this death was only the change through which Nature was seeding down a nobler era; the old dying that the new might live. Rome was full of mighty forces, struggling to find vent. Great men rose, one after another, through generations. A grander empire than the world had yet seen was forming. An unequalled genius for organi-

zation was welding hitherto separated and hostile nations and races into one vast body politic. This huge organism was vitalized by the Law which still to-day, under all western jurisprudence, moulds the society of the modern world. The intellect put forth new buds, and blossomed beautifully in the golden age of Rome. The conscience showed signs of a new growth, and the noblest and purest of ethics exhaled the fragrance of heroic virtue in the Stoics. Rome was yeasty with fermenting life, springing up from the decay of old polities and faiths. Other peoples, in feebler measures, were experiencing the same fermentings. A school of New Platonists was renewing in Greece somewhat of the sheen of intellect which had transfigured her past. Greece was still alive speculatively, as the Christian Church soon found, when its new thoughts acted as leaven in her philosophic mind. The East was still pouring its latest and highest religious and ethical life out from India, far into the West, penetrating along the Euphrates towards the world's centre. Egypt was renewing, in Alexandria, memories of the time when she was the nursing mother of the nations, the university of the world. Israel, so far from having had no history during the four centuries which seem to drop out between the Old and the New Testaments, had been living most gloriously, with a noble fruitage in heroic men

and religious literature. With the dead cones of the past upon her boughs, her needle leaves were tipping with faint, fresh green, promising some new spring.

The yeasty thoughts and aspirations of East and West were wafted to and fro in a free interchange of national ideas and sentiments never known before. The Roman Empire, with its magnificent roads, its secure commerce, its incessant patrol of land and sea, made trade's travel safe and easy. The Jews had colonized in every great city, having a quarter in old Rome, and in Alexandria a population of one hundred thousand. Aristocratic Greeks and Romans journeyed everywhere for pleasure, as the English do now. A universal restlessness tossed the waves of the human sea to and fro in every direction. The Greek tongue served among the varied languages of the empire as the French has done in modern Europe. Ideas were readily exchanged through this medium of interpretation. The different nations came thus face to face with each other; read each other's inmost thoughts, quickened each other's deepest yearnings, passed their best yield over into a common seething of the soul of man. What a writer in a late *Contemporary* happily called "a cross-fertilization of ideas" was going on vigorously, auguring a rich life as the issue. A huge alembic drew into itself the various elements of the race

religions, dissolving them and recombining them in strange, new crystallizations. Jews went east and west, carrying the treasures of their national literature, with its yearnings up towards the Eternal Righteousness. The intense faith and noble aspiration of Israel were quickening a new spiritual life in men everywhere. The spread of Judaism was causing serious thought among the philosophers of other nations. The world was on the eve of a vast conversion to some spiritualized form of Judaism, drawn by the character revealing itself through the prophets. The conscience of man was shadowed with images of an Ideal Holiness, brooding close over it, which Israel testified was to come forth upon the earth.

Greeks were found in every city with their wonderful philosophies and their dreams of human sons of the gods. Strangers from the mysterious lands of the rising sun brought the profound and subtle speculations of the Brahmans and the sweet story of the Buddha.

In the meeting-place of East and West, Alexandria, a Jew, cultured in the philosophies of Greece and enriched with the mystic wisdom of ancient Egypt, fused the thoughts and aspirations of these immortal peoples into a system which interpreted the Old Testament by the Laws and the Republic, re-edited Moses by Plato. The traditions in the sacred books of Israel of a mysterious

personage appearing to men as a man, yet speaking with the authority of God, a mediating Jehovah-angel, and the noble personification of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, were explained by the fundamental idea of the Platonic philosophy. This taught that every seen object on earth existed first in the unseen realm, that every fact was first an idea, every thing a thought in the mind of God; and that this spiritual existence in God was the reality of being, of which the actual world was only the manifestation. The original idea or ideal of mankind was first in God, a die Man imprinting its likeness imperfectly on the flesh in men, a mediating being ideally human, and so essentially divine; the philosophy which, as I have already said, afterwards naturally clothed the perfect spirit of Jesus with the thought-body of the Word.

Here, then, was every condition naturally provided for the coming of some Christ. A social body Rome was growing; the framework of modern Christian civilization. An intellectual body Greece was growing; the framework of the Christian philosophy. Humanity seemed waiting only for the sending of some spirit forth from God, who should vivify the Human Ideal, and in the inspiration of his Character make himself the soul of the new order, and be the long-dreamed-of Christ. Everywhere Humanity seemed struggling to the birth with this divine

soul. Unrest, change, revolution, yeasty yearnings, new crystallizations in church and state, the old world in tremors and convulsions, the faint cries of a new life rising above the groans of the dying Past—must we not say of this unique epoch, with Renan, “The cry of a world in labor!”

III.

Was there any issue to this travail of Humanity? When the labor-throes came upon the old world, and the Human Ideal, begotten of God in Man, and slowly maturing through centuries, struggled to the birth, was there a Son born to God? The answer is—Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus is an unquestionable fact of history. The day is past when men can ask, as Napoleon asked of Herder, whether Jesus really lived. Our only question is as to how he lived. It matters not who wrote the fragmentary sketches we call the gospels, nor in what decade nor half-century they were written. We track them, as we do any literary relics, by the references to them in other writers of history, up to within a century from the death of the man whose life they portray. They were the outgrowths of a religious society which had clearly been in existence during that century, spreading with marvellous rapidity along the shores of the Mediterranean; and which grew

around the memory of its founder, of whom it gave these accounts. Jesus of Nazareth is as certain a fact as Julius Cæsar.

And the impress of his personality is, to say the least, as strongly stamped on humanity as that of the illustrious Roman. Jesus is no nebulous personage. No form of history is clearer than his; no individuality more sharply cut against the past. Mists have indeed gathered round him, and the glamour of the imagination has distorted his face. But through the fog we see his outlined form unmistakably. Lacordaire said, "A myth is a fact transfigured by an idea." The fact Jesus has doubtless been transfigured by the idea The Christ. But this shining through of the actual by the ideal changes no essential feature. We recognize the human Jesus as did the disciples on the mount when he loomed transfigured before them. We do not have to await the slow winnowings to which criticism is subjecting the story of Jesus, in order to reach a conclusion as to his real individuality. Every essential trait is in any one of the three gospels whose general accuracy is doubted by no one. Winnow from any one of these every grain of questionable matter, every tale of word or deed which lacks sufficient authentication, according to the most critical experts, or which arouses suspiciousness on any grounds, and Jesus remains substantially unaf-

fected. One of the epoch-makers of history, Paul, wrote his letters during the generation after Jesus; threw his great mind into the movement begun by the disciples of the Nazarene within a decade from his death (Keim says within two or three years of it); and to Paul the character of Jesus was what it is now to us.

So clear and strong is the impression his spirit has made that our critics even test suspicious passages by ringing them upon his character, to try if they chime with its sweet resonance. In other words, out of all that has been told us of the wonderful Galilean, accredited in the gospels or unaccredited in the New Testament apocrypha, a personality has arisen which is itself the ultimate arbiter upon all things reported of him. We are more sure of the character of Jesus than of anything told us about him, in the writings from which we draw our knowledge concerning him.

His measure has been taken by history.

That a cause is the sum of its effects is as axiomatic in history as in nature. It hold as true of a man's work as of a pebble's ripple in the lake. We measure the power of a leader by the force of the movement he originates. We measure Jesus by the most astounding religious and ethical movement in the history of man. Doubtless other tributaries trickled into the stream-bed opened from the Nazarite hills; other lives swelled by their im-

petus the resistless rush of the Christian Church. But they were sucked into the channel of one life, and swept on by its tremendous set. Some one there was equal, in the power of his personality, to the immeasurable forcefulness of Christianity ; some man, himself, in one sense, the expression of the forces of his age, whose weight is equal to the disturbance caused by his entrance into history. If we had no account of a Jesus of Nazareth, we should be searching the field of the Augustan age for the life that caused so immense a perturbation in the movements of the social heavens. Some Le Verrier of criticism would have to discover a Christ. But where should we find this marvel? No known personage of history could admeasure, by his mass, the attraction felt in Christianity. Magnificent as was Paul's mental and moral power, mighty as was his influence on the nascent Christianity, he cannot magnify into this Christ. He who wrote the Epistles to the Romans and to the Corinthians never could have spoken the words and lived the life accredited to Jesus. A mightier than he possessed him, as he knew and owned. Much as he strove to be like his Master, he was so far inferior to him that a comparison is impossible. His voice is other than that of the Christ who spake through him. His step walked not in the rhythm of that diviner life. In doing his splendid work, as the builder of the Christian

Church, he worked over, unconsciously, the plans of the Architect ; and while rearing the temple in which ages have worshipped, wrought into it so much of Pauline metaphysics that it is decaying above us, threatening us with the necessity of a rebuilding and a temporary spiritual houselessness.

Paul's is the only name known to us concerning whom it is possible to raise the question whether he were not the real author of Christianity. John Stuart Mill said : " The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which he is reputed to have wrought ; but who among his disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or imagining the life and character revealed in the gospels ? " (" Essay on Theism ").

Jesus not only actually lived, but he lived as the real originator of Christianity ; the life whose spiritual forcefulness is admeasured by the regenerating power and exhaustless vitality of the Christian spirit ; the life whose inspiring Character is photographed in the Human Ideal lifted above mankind, Imaging God. The picture of Jesus, in its essential outlines, is of a man who taught the highest ethics and the purest religion reached by mankind in all its ages of searching ; achieved a perfection of Character unparalleled in any other historical personage ; bodied, in exquisite bloom of

beauty, the loftiest longings of humanity's aspirations; and was the very flower of goodness unto which every swelling bud of the human race strove in rounding fulness of symmetric holiness. His power in the world has been the inspiration of this Perfect Character in the hearts of men, its authority upon their consciences, its revelation to their minds of the Father-God.

IV.

If then, to crown this evidence that the Christly Character is the aim and end of the natural evolution of the human soul, I find its flowering upon the main spiritual stem of mankind, the one race-trunk where it should have been expected, shall I not call the proof complete? This is just what I do find.

Each people has had a special function assigned it in the organic development of the human race; has been constituted, by its national genius, the organ for some particular contribution to the general life. Not that any people has evolved its one dominant faculty alone. In order to live at all it has had to develop, more or less, many other activities; and thus every nation has had its polity and art and science and poetry and industry and trade; while each has carried some one form of life far beyond all others, and has left its yield in this department as its legacy to posterity.

To Israel it was clearly given to evolve the spiritual and ethical ideals, as its national specialty. Other peoples worshipped and aspired, and slowly shaped above them the character which was at once the Image of God and the Ideal of man. But other peoples worshipped and aspired secondarily, warring, organizing, dreaming, speculating, painting, trading, as the first business of existence. Empire or wealth or culture absorbed the chief energies of the nation, and religion and morality took what was left. Their bequests to posterity were philosophies, laws, institutions, politics, arts, sciences. One people, alone, found in worship and aspiration its chief life, and proved in its legacy to after-ages that the shaping of the Human Ideal, the Image of God, into a Perfect Character was its real *raison d'être*.

Israel, too, had of necessity its laws and institutions, its industries and trades, its arts and philosophies, in some degrees of development. It seemed at different periods in its history to be about turning its energies into some one of these ambitions. It promised under David and Solomon to become a great military empire. Its imagination budded into a hopeful poetry, while its science and philosophy were at least far on in the embryonic stages. But its empire was short-lived, its poetry, as such alone, never would have immortalized it, its science and philosophy did not pass beyond the rudimen-

tary stage. Not in law or war, in truth or beauty, dwelt the genius of this singular people. Its soul was its largest organ. It had a genius for Godliness; and its Godliness was not power or wisdom or knowledge, but righteousness. Its ideals were ethical. It identified religion and morality, and throned above all life an Eternal Righteousness. Into the worship of this God—one with the hungry aspiration for the perfection of human goodness—this vital people sucked the energies of its being. It warred, sung, questioned under the masterful sway of this passion. It achieved nothing apart from this enthusiasm. Its fruitage is in its national literature, and this is wholly religious and ethical. Its institutions, histories, poetries, and philosophies are precious to us because they breathe out all common life into aspiration after the perfection of human righteousness and worship of the Divine Righteousness. Its books have thus become the world's Bible—the fount of inspiration for the culture of character. Its history is the story of the evolution of the Ideal of Character. Through all the ascending stages that we find in other peoples, we track the growth of the nation in this one true religion. It was led out amongst all the great races of the earth to learn the lesson each people was being taught of God. It was schooled in every vicissitude of national experience, and disciplined into a supreme and sole devotion to the mission it

felt within its soul. So it climbed beyond the high-water mark of worship and aspiration elsewhere reached. Nowhere did the Human Ideal Imaging God rise so gloriously clear. In the great prophets the soul of the nation swells and bursts towards the Christly Character.

We who to-day no longer claim for the Hebrews a monopoly of inspiration and revelation, and rejoice to see among other peoples the beams of the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, do nevertheless recognize this pre-eminence of Israel spiritually.

In the first flush of our enthusiasm over the Sacred Books of the East, we may have fancied that we had unearthed greater treasures than our old Bible held. So devoted an admirer of the ethnic religions as Max Müller confesses, in the preface to his Hibbert Lectures, this expectation over-wrought. With this master of comparative religion we must rank Israel supreme among the peoples of the earth, in the realm of the soul. Of all this there is no room for questioning. This is the residuum which remains after the severe fires of criticism have evaporated the miraculously marvellous, which formerly most impressed the imagination.

The history of Israel, in the hands of the most radical of critics, grows into a natural evolution of the Christly Character, as the Human Ideal,

the Image of God ; until the translucence becomes almost transparence, and the Face of the Christ shapes itself into human form ; until the nebulous vision seems waiting only an individual around whom to crystallize, in whom to materialize, and the Word be made flesh. That such a man should at some time come, to embody the spirit of the people, all history leads us to expect. Every nation tends to head itself in a man, yearns towards an individuality, in whom its genius may clothe itself in perfect form. The history of each great race becomes, in the perspective of the ages, the history of some colossal man. The philosophy of each great epoch is found to lie in the story of some Plato, Mahomet, Cæsar, Shakespeare, Napoleon. Israel found its Man. In the autumn of its life it came to seed. In its death-agonies it gave birth to the Personality in whom its whole soul lived, and so its body crumbled away from among the nations of earth.

“The ultimate attainment of perfect, true religion was at once the highest and noblest aspiration of antiquity, and a goal in striving to reach which most lost their way far too early ; others, who had descried the mark more clearly, eventually lost it altogether from their sight ; and this one people alone, at the end of a two-thousand-years struggle, actually attained it.” (Ewald ; History of Israel : Introduction.)

A Jew breathed up the perfect worship, breathed out the fullest aspiration, lived the Human Ideal, and in it Imaged God. The Christly Character came forth upon Jesus of Nazareth.

The natural evolution is complete.

V.

Lowell, apostrophizing the rose growing on the bush, calls it

“The mystery of its life made visible,
The yearning of its rapture realized.”

Is not that what we must say of Jesus, the flower of man, in whom the Perfect Character, visioned in the heart of humanity and slowly growing out towards realization, stands forth a living fact?

Do we not thus hold in Jesus the clue to the historical education of the human race? Without raising a single question concerning the miraculous elements of the story of Jesus, are we not obliged to see in him the Providential issue of the natural evolution of the religious and ethical consciousness of mankind; a man who lives the Human Ideals and so mirrors the Divine Realities, of which they are shadows in humanity?

So far from reluctantly conceding this natural evolution of Jesus as a surrender to those who think thus to account for him, I press it as the true wonder of the Nazarene; that which drives

us straight home to the heart of the old faith in him.

Whence is the conception growing thus through ages, and coming to a perfect birth?

Is not this mystery of man's yearning the higher mystery of God's yearning? Is not every natural evolution the coming out in nature of the thought of God? Is not the natural evolution of the Human Ideal the manifestation or revelation of the Divine Spirit? Is not the Christly Character begotten in humanity of the Heavenly Father of man?

In a far truer sense than any mere physical fact of the individual son of Mary, is not that profound and beautiful poetic word the very truth—"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of the Highest"? Using our highest reason upon this mystery of realized yearning in humanity, must we not own in this Perfect Character the expression, upon earth, of the Eternal Thought of Man in God, the Word made flesh; and, whatever the difficulties of identifying the individual Jesus with the Universal Man, say of him in whom this Character comes forth, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"?

With the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews

I am obliged to say, concerning the fulfilment of Israelitish history: "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by a Son." With the writer of St. John's gospel I must say, concerning the larger story of mankind: "The true light, which lighteth every man, was coming on into the world." With St. Paul I must say, concerning the age which evolved this Perfect Character: "When the fullness of the times had come God sent forth his Son."

There are two beautiful stories, coming down from the age of Jesus, which tell us that at the moment when his young manhood opened to the consciousness of his high powers and holy mission he unhesitatingly accepted their tremendous responsibilities, and consecrated himself unreservedly to his Father's will; and that again, when, in the midst of his active career, the shadows of the end crept upon him and he discerned, down the life-vista, the bloody shameful death, he turned his face full to the dark vision, in unshrinking fidelity to duty; and that in each of these crucial hours he heard a voice, speaking out of heaven—as from the Eternal Father's heart, seeing the highest work that he had made, "that it was good," and rejoicing—"Thou art my Beloved Son."

My faith in Jesus the Christ is an Amen to that

sigh of satisfaction of the Eternal Righteousness, over the one perfect character of earth, which interprets the past and prophesies the future of man and thus reveals God.

My faith is that of the philosophic scholar, historian and statesman, Bunsen; of whom it was truly said "he believed in Christ because he believed in God and in history."

THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—*Philippians* ii. 9-11.

“JESUS is dethroned,” said a brilliant liberal preacher of our city, a few years ago. “His ethics are a bar to human progress,” said another liberal lecturer, in this city, only last winter. From many sides we hear a chorus of voices, proclaiming the *déchéance* of Christianity.

If this be so, then our philosophy of the Christ cannot be true. The evidence of history is indeed so strong that, were the past alone in view, we might confidently close our argument with the last discourse. But there is a future before humanity, into whose dim vistas men look anxiously, ominous as it appears of changes creeping over Christianity. If the Future stands shaking its

head against the testimony of the Past, waiting only its turn of time to disprove this argument, then we may not press for judgment in favor of Jesus.

There can be no doubt that our age is peculiarly one of transition. It is like the winding up of one of the geologic epochs, ushering in a total transformation of climate and scenery. Within a century, ancient political and social institutions have been crumbling in with revolutionary rapidity.

Within a half-century, the religious world has been breaking up its shore-lines so fast that our last decade scarcely recognizes the old coasts, by whose head-lights ancestral generations have steered their voyage along the sea of life. That this is an inevitable stage in the movement by which humanity sweeps through "the ringing grooves of change," towards higher knowledge and nobler life, we know, in that it has been wrought by truth, sincerely sought and honestly won. This transitional process would of necessity entail serious transformations in the form and features of Christianity, for which we should all be prepared. But the surface change is so rapid and so steady that it looks, to many, like a total break-up of Christianity, an utter collapse of faith, a cataclysm through which the world is to emerge into new climates of the soul, where beneath dull and leaden skies the stars alone will light the life over which no sun rises,

through the arctic night, from above the Judæan hills.

A great change is coming over the realm of thought, whose profound significance only philosophic minds discern, whose issues not the deepest insight can clearly foreshadow. Every sign points to a thawing out of the old forms, in which the religious life of mankind has crystallized, with the alternations of mental chaos—if any sane mind can believe this possible in a world of law—or a new order, in which Christianity, as we have known it traditionally, will find an uncongenial environment.

While I recognize this, I see, however, the general law of life, which forbids my thinking that man's mind will remain in the fluidity of mere sentiment upon the great mysteries of being; will ever, for any length of time, fail to crystallize, in some positive forms of thought, upon the constant problems of existence. Man will never be without a religion. He is religious by nature. The facts of Force, Law, Thought, Love, are too real in nature to be long missed. They affect him too seriously to be treated with indifference. He must wonder, worship, question, believe. Man never has been irreligious, save in decadent periods; and whatever the change coming over society it is intensely vital, prophetic of progress. I no more fear that the world is to be left religionless than that the

order of nature, the constitution of things, is about to change wholly, and water going to run up hill. Already the surface-drift of Science is feeling a deep undertrend, setting back towards the eternal verities of man's faith; a deep-sea current of thought, making for the ancient philosophic conception of life, on whose surface religion has always blossomed in beauty. Our own Concord school of philosophy is a notable sign of this re-emergence of the thought which upbears religion, a genuine revival, among the people most quick to feel every breath of the spirit of the age, of the spiritual philosophy of Greece and Germany. From the far East, the home of the spiritual philosophy and of natural religion, I look for a profound impulse upon the soul of the western world, under which the old instincts and intuitions will reassert their invincible vitality, and the clear forms of faith crystallize once more in the mind.

But this religion of the future need not necessarily be Christianity, say some. Nay, they add, it will not be; but, by the law of progress, will be some new and higher form of thought with its fresh inspiration. Christianity is decadent. It, too, is obeying the old order, and is dying, to give birth to some other faith.

This decadence seems too patent to dispute. Alike in body, mind, and soul—in ecclesiastical organization, theologic system, and ethical energy

—Christianity indicates exhaustion, betokens oncoming death.

I.

Beautiful in its fresh youth, vital and powerful in its maturity, the Christian Church has been, now for a long time, slowly breaking up. The Greek and Roman schism halved the body ecclesiastic. The Reformation began a dismemberment of the Roman half, which has ever since been proceeding, tearing away the old unity, bit by bit, into the infinitesimal multitude of contending sects which caricature the dream of "one catholic and apostolic church." Outside of all the churches, a constantly growing mass of nebulous Christianity is accumulating; repelled from them by the obsolete ecclesiasticism which, amid the burning questions of the day, busies itself with fanning the cinders of effete fires, quibbles with the canonists, poses with priestly *modistes*, and dissevers the life of religion from the life of the great earth, whose arts and sciences and politics and economies the Spirit of Truth and Beauty is breathing out, with enlarging and ennobling inspiration, towards the Coming Man. Church Councils discuss, fruitlessly, the problem of how to regain their hold of this outside mass of human life, which grows, with each new generation, more ominously large. In the internodes of the ecclesiastical spheres, this star-dust of ancient

churches awaits the fusing fire of some new faith, to gravitate together in spiritual attraction, and round its ordained cycle through time.

II.

Christianity seems as thoroughly decadent in its mind. It had a living mind once. The earlier church thought freshly and strongly. It grasped every problem of thought, subjected every old-world answer to its glowing alembic, dissolved every belief that could be melted in its fierce fires, and reshaped a philosophy of life on which the world has lived for centuries.

Paul created a new era in the history of the intellect. Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, marked epochs in the growth of mind. Christian theology—as formulated in the early ages, the middle ages, and the Reformation era—was a truly vital development of thought. The world-old problems of being were worked over afresh, and answered according to the knowledge and life then won. This interpretation of the mysteries fed faith for generations, down even to our own day. Here and there men on the higher planes of intellectual life grew dissatisfied, and reached out for other answers to the life-riddle; but the mass of men, of intelligent and educated men, sucked juices from the Thirty-nine Articles and the Westminster Confession. The unprecedented rapidity of progress, in the

knowledge of nature and of man, during the last generation, has rendered these great guesses already obsolete. The systems of the churches are dead. Their dry bones yield no marrow to the hungry mind of our age. Pulpits cease to draw their nourishment from them, and the pews complain little about the change of diet. Vestries ask one thing of new parsons—Don't give us theology.

This is no superficial drift of dilettanteish liberalism.

The human heart is as hungry as ever for honest answers to the tremendous questions Whence and Whither. When it thinks it has found an answer, it holds that faith as tenaciously as ever schoolman hugged his syllogisms. But the mass of averagely intelligent men are slowly and painfully realizing that there is no answer in the Thirty-nine Articles and Westminster Confession for A.D. 1880. Their whole thought is as antique and obsolete as the language of Chaucer or Spenser. Men ask now for a gospel in the vernacular of the nineteenth century; not necessarily a new gospel, but at least a translation of the old gospel of the Mediævals and Ancients into a "tongue understood of the people." Science has made necessary an entire reconstruction of many of our received opinions, and an elimination of certain dogmas which are either wholly mistaken renderings of the life-puzzles or such crude accounts of them as

to be relatively false. Antiquarian research and philological criticism have gone so far in the reconstruction of the Bible, by the application of the principles and methods which have been so fruitful in other national literatures, that the old-time notion of it, in which we were educated, will only suffice to land our children in utter scepticism. Our late-won knowledge of the other religions of earth is flooding the whole structure of Christianity and its foundation, Judaism, with a new and intense light, in which we are seeing the real significance of the structure of the faith. Rites and institutions and beliefs are revealing their true nature and place in history, and the controversies of the churches are becoming simply archaeological curiosities. It is interesting, and in a certain sense valuable, to us to know how our grandfathers thought about the many problems of life. It is absolutely necessary for us to know how we ourselves are to answer the fateful Sphinx. The man is not to be put off with the explanations that did for the child. We must have an answer up to the understanding and knowledge won for us by the brave toil of earlier generations.

And to all this yeasty, seething thought, this earnest, honest inquiry, the churches offer us—the venerable Thirty-nine Articles and Westminster Confession. They have no opinions later than the sixteenth century. Knowing whence

and how these dogmas have grown, we are asked to receive, in due docility, the doctrines of Total Depravity and Everlasting Punishment. Sublimely unconscious of the day that is breaking outside the church-walls, the priests go on droning the old refrains about an impossible Bible and an unnatural Christ, and anathematizing those who don't care to come in and listen to their music of the past. Pulpits are timorous and silent on the questions of the age. Conventions re-authorize at every triennial session, as text-books for theological seminaries, learned treatises which are as accurate maps of our present knowledge as the celestial charts of the Ptolemaic astronomers, with "cycle and epi-cycle scribbled o'er," or the sixteenth century terrestrial globes.

Fresh broods of mole-ministers swarm out from these nests of obscurantism, unable to bear the light rising over earth, happy only when burrowing in the depths of the dark ages. Nothing is so much feared by the average ecclesiastic as fresh, honest, truth-seeking thought.

The sure sign of feebleness, timidity, is upon the churches. The token of old age is seen—sterility. They no longer can conceive and bring to the birth a new thought of life. At least so they believe, in their anxious fear of the death of all faith in such a travail of mind; and so the world is ready enough to believe of them. Where there is

a new thought born it is stamped at once with illegitimacy, and only the sheer force and the noble character of a Maurice or a Bushnell wins him slow recognition, by the very church he is irritating into some feeble mental life.

A new growth of thought is absolutely necessary, if the churches are to retain the intellect of man in loyalty to the Christ.

III.

It even looks as though the very soul of Christianity were decadent. Its ethical force flags and seems to fail. Individual inspiration waxes faint. The grand passion for holiness has declined into the desire for respectability. Christians aspire now to be innocent of great crimes. The churches seem conscious of an ebbing of the moral energy which once enabled them honestly to claim the title of "the Saints." Church membership no longer is synonymous with high character. Scandals abound among the disciples. Good men prove weak under common temptations. The fires are down.

The aggressive power of the churches fails. The early enthusiasm, which carried the Gospel so triumphantly over Europe, no longer wins the ancient victories. Christianity advances in heathen lands with a slowness that taxes the faith of Missionary Boards. Where it acts most powerfully

it is simply as a solvent to the ancient religions, disintegrating the old faiths without substituting a new belief. Christendom's denial of the Christly Character renders futile its appeals to pagan nations to follow the Christ. Official England forces the opium trade upon China against the prayers of the Emperor, and misgoverns India until a Famine Secretary becomes an established function of the Indian Bureau; and the Chinese and Hindoos turn away with contempt from the vaunted superiority of Christian ethics.

For beneath all other failures of Christianity lies its failure to transform the social and political life of Christendom. The realms of government and business, the chief spheres of human life, have never really been won by the Christian spirit. Our Political Science and Political Economy are still, in theory and in practice, essentially pagan.

The forces which began the rejuvenation of the decadent societies of the old world fail in the task that later ages have imposed upon them. Modern society is a mass of anachronisms, a huge body of effete institutions, laws, and customs which oppress the feebler classes and repress the growth of man; and the Church cannot "loose him and let him go free." On the contrary, the Church puts her seal upon the stone which the State rolls against the door of the tomb where Humanity lies buried,

and in the name of God forbids its disturbance. Labor sweats and toils, Atlas-like, under the world of wealth he upholds, and the Church rebukes his murmurings, and calls his outcries complaints against the divine order.

Everywhere a new and more glorious order is struggling to emerge from the ethical chaos we call civilization, awaiting only some regenerative enthusiasm for human rights to thrill through the seething mass, with eyes turned in mute supplication to the Church of the Christus Consolator ; but its batteries won't work, and no electric throb draws classes and nations together in the brotherhood of love. Every new advance of humanity is won against the obstructiveness of the churches. Every social and political injustice, that one after another is swept violently away—Slavery, Land Monopoly, the Tyranny of Capital, War—is defended, up to the last, by the sign of Him who came to break every yoke and to let the oppressed go free ; over whose cradle the angels sang, Peace on earth, good-will among men.

To all the social stir of our age, the fermentation of quick upspringing life, leavening the sodden mass of society, the churches are either actively hostile or apathetically indifferent.

There is not one orthodox church to-day which, in its official Synods or Councils or Conventions, does not show such an utter divorce from the real

life of man upon earth, such an imbecile ignorance of the real problems of this working, whirling, wailing world, as to make many of those who cling still to them, reverent of the past, hopeful of the future, well-nigh loose their hold in sheer weariness of waiting, and echo the voice heard ringing in their ears—Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? The world is teeming with problems vast and urgent. Humanity is growing conscious of its magnificent possibilities of glorious life, which are still postponed, from generation to generation, because the churches, which should be consecrated to this task of social regeneration, have not the mind or the heart to grapple with it. They are busied, as their prototypes of old, with tithing mint, anise, and cummin, the pretty, petty play of charities, while neglecting the weightier matters of the law, the stern and solemn sentences of justice. They are piously active in amateur philanthropy, the dilettanteish cultivation of antiquated beneficences, while unconcerned with the pressing problems of genuine reform in sanitary, social, and political science. They are enthusiastic over their collections of ecclesiastic bric-a-brac, in splendid churches and lovely altars and charming reredoses and sweet antependiums, while rearing in our tenements the misshapen monstrosities charitably called men, in lieu of the forms, “god-like and noble,” whose production, in health,

intelligence, and virtue, is the one true and divine Fine Art of life.

The enthusiasm of humanity is severing itself from the enthusiasm for Christ. Philanthropy has ceased to be the synonym for the Christianity of the churches, and has become the name for the multiplying humanitarian activities which rise in rivalry over against the churches.

IV.

These signs of decadence are no slanders of the enemies of Christianity. They are the sad symptoms which a loving diagnosis discloses.

Are then the days of Christianity numbered? Does the Christ lie a-dying in the body he has for eighteen centuries inhabited? What if all this decadence of Christianity were only the crumbling away of the effete body of institutions, dogmas, and codes, that a new and more spiritual body might enclothe its essential life? What if the tree were dying down, only to strike forth from the roots a more glorious growth? What if the mask were dropping to pieces, that the face of the true Christ, the Perfect Character which realizes the Human Ideals and Images God, might shine in new splendor over the new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness?

Precisely this is my interpretation of the painful phenomena I cannot refuse to see all round us.

It is the death through which life advances that I read in this decadence. An overgrown and effete ecclesiasticism, an overgrown and effete theology have induced a palsied morality. Christianity is therefore shedding its dead skin, in the process of renewing its vitality. Christianity is not the Christ. That Human Ideal and Image of God which constitute the Christly Character, this, and this alone, is the real core and heart of Christianity.

Only in this has there ever been any real unity in Christianity. In all else it has never been stationary, forever changing. Its great periods have been so widely dissimilar from each other as to appear like different religions. What unity has there been between the church of the Apostles, the church of Constantine, the church of Hildebrand, the church of Luther and Calvin, and the church of Stanley and Channing, except in the very core of Christianity—the old and world-wide religious and ethical consciousness, and the recognition of Jesus as the Christ, in whom the visions of the soul are bodied, shaping the shadow of God? The statics of Christianity are not in ecclesiastical polity nor in theologic systems, not in sacraments or creeds, but in the Christhood of Jesus of Nazareth; the Providential preparation of a Man in whom the Ideals of Humanity should appear, Imaging God, and thus verify their

authority upon the conscience of men, making the aspiration for the Christly Character one with the worship of The Eternal. All else that in successive ages has crystallized round this core of Christianity has been fluent, even the very conceptions in which this faith has stiffened itself into dogmatic thought; and Christianity has lived on, renewing its outer forms from this vital germ.

In this inheres all that is really vital to religion and ethics in Christianity. Institutions and dogmas are the necessary body of facts and opinions housing this spirit. They are confessedly of no use save as they keep alive this soul. Their end is to feed and inspire this character. The highest expressions of Christianity, in every church, in prayer and hymn and sermon and life, are filled with the reverent love of the beautiful Character of the Christ. In that, the churches, however they differ, are one in culturing this Character they declare the one essential factor in Christianity.

Out of this essential truth of the Christ ever-new sproutings may grow, in successive spring-tides of civilization. While the root lives the stem may die down to the very ground, and all its leafage and fruitage wither, and this very death be the process by which a more glorious growth shall put forth its sheltering shade and life-sustaining fruit. Christianity is dying, as the enswathing folds of the corn die, when, within, the seed for a new year

is goldening. The Church, with its magnificent temple reared over Jesus of Nazareth, has proved a mausoleum, entombing, beneath the divine honors paid to him, the regenerative life which was to renew the earth. Theology, which has apotheosized the carpenter of Galilee, in its very exaltation of the human Jesus and its worship of the divinity recognized in him, has missed the essential nature of the divine. And so, to-day, to free the really divine Christ, the church is crumbling, and the faith about Jesus fading, and through church and faith this one fact shining, that it is the Perfect Character, realizing the Human Ideals and Imaging God, which makes our Master the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Men are learning that to discern in the character of Jesus humanity's true ideal, to accept his spirit as mankind's law of life, is to win sight of the Eternal Thought of Man, slowly issuing upon the race, to behold in it the shadow of the Being brooding over man and thus to see God.

So simple is this conception of the Christ that its reality is wholly missed in the glare of the more pretentious vision of the miraculous Christ on which the Church has gazed for centuries; and when that vision fades we think there is no Christ left, and the soul cries out—how bitterly!—"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Now again the voice of that

Perfect Character with whom our age is comfortlessly walking, seeing only the "mere man," peaks; and men are falling down saying, "Rabboni."

This is that which I see and hear, in the issue of the painful break-up all around us of the old thought about Jesus. Men who have lost the traditional notions about him, in which for centuries the Church has rested, turn out no infidels or sceptics; turn not upon their former Lord, with the license of liberty, but, with a profounder reverence and a tenderer love and a more glowing enthusiasm, follow him still, as the very Master of Life, bowing before his Spirit, and saying with sincere and intelligent awe, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is the significance of a host of noble books which have appeared in our generation, from "Ecce Homo" down to "Philo Christus" and "Keim's Life of Jesus of Nazara." This is the clue to the evident change of thought going on among the clergy which the "unco' guid" denounce as infidelity, and the outside critics brand as hypocrisy. It is not infidelity, since it is profoundly believing. It is not hypocrisy, since it is intensely honest. It is simply a changed vision of The Christ, in which men are sure they see the real substance of their old faith; which those who, within or without, look upon the fact of Jesus from some other parallax may wholly miss. And

this vision is seen through the lens of the very philosophy which has disclosed to the Church, in Jesus, The Christ. It is that very faith in simpler form, cleared of clouds and seen in its own light.

Years ago Mr. Emerson said to a friend, in answer to the question why he had so little to utter about Jesus—"The way to preach Christ to this age is to be silent about him."

The garrulity of ages has necessitated the silence in which our generation has sat tongue-tied, till at length it is becoming possible to speak a definite word that may be understood. When, in the dying away of the outer husk of Christianity, the Human Ideal and Divine Image which breathes in the character of Jesus of Nazareth, shall be seen to be The Christ, then we shall cease to fear that the reign of The Son of Man is to pass away, or to look for any other new religion than the religion of The Christ.

In that Character are the very ideals unto which the world is yearning, in its noblest life; the very forces, in exhaustless richness, which society craves for its regeneration. For religion and morality the hope of the future is in Jesus. The full-lunged life of the Coming Man will beat its systole and diastole of worship and aspiration under the breathings of his spirit.

V.

Extricate the quintessence of every religion over which our spiritual chemists are laboring, and whatever in its thought was right and true, that is most fully and perfectly uttered in the words and wrought in the life of Jesus. The pure and simple theology of Jesus, breathing through his daily life, is the essential word of God, into which every religion seeks to sublate itself. God, the soul, the life to come, the three postulates of all religion, are the themes melodiously voiced in the Nazarene. The real character of God, the true character of man, the certain character of the life to come, live before us in crystal-line clearness in the character of Jesus. There we see that unto which all religion has ever been reaching up: the confessed Human Ideal, the self-evidencing Image of God, the authoritative vision of the future; the life unto which men are to aspire, as the very truth of the nature of man; the life before which men are to worship, as the very truth of the source of man in God; the life for which men are to hope, as the very truth of the destiny of man.

What Max Müller said, so finely, of the Lord's Prayer is true of the religion which was bodied by Jesus in this matchless voice of worship and aspiration:

“Thousands of years have passed since the Aryan nations separated, to travel to the North and the South, the West and the East; they have each formed their languages, they have each founded empires and philosophies, they have each built temples and razed them to the ground; they have all grown older and, it may be, wiser and better; but when they search for a name for what is most exalted and yet most dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and love, the infinite and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far and as near as near can be; they can but combine the self-same words, and utter once more the primeval Aryan prayer, Heaven-Father, in that form which will endure forever—‘Our Father which art in heaven.’”

There is no room for any new religion other than a renewed religion of the Christ. The only claim to a new religion, among all our seething sects, is made by Spiritualism and by Positivism.

Spiritualism, in so far as it may be, not a fraud and something more than an unconscious form of science, the discovery of some, as yet unresolved, psychic forces, is only the reassertion of one of the oldest and simplest of religion's intuitions: that which declares the existence of a realm of intelligent beings, beyond the ken of the ordinary

senses, and the attempt to bring the seen and the unseen spheres into intercommunication. What there may be of fact in it amid its rubbish constitutes no valid claim for a new religion. There is no fresh light on any of the three great postulates of religion. To Swedenborg is due any substantial thoughts concerning the other sphere it offers, and he was intensely Christian.

The so-called religion of Humanity, born of Positivism, as a philosophy is simply Agnosticism, the denial of any knowledge of the Source of Man; and, as all Agnosticism, essentially shallow in that it goes nowhere below the surface of thought. It is thoroughly unphilosophical, in that, basing itself on the existence of a world of order, it refuses to ask whence can come *an order*; or to follow up the cumulative indications which, in nature and in man, point to its source in Mind; and fails to recognize the reflections of the Universal Mind in the reason, the conscience, the affections of humanity. To set up Man, "writ large", as a real Being, to study the wonders of His organic life, through the generations, to call forth the sentiments of awe and love and trust towards Him; and then to be content with this simulacrum, this thin mask of the Power of necessity ensphering Man, one so evidently with the other-than-Man, Nature, the synthesis of all being, the alone Real Being, without whom Man

is an abstraction, an empty generalization, a false use of the capital M; and to believe nothing of HIM who is the substance of all lower being, to raise no worship unto HIM—this is too preposterous long to satisfy the little coterie of cultured minds who, in England, give this new religion all its illusive show of strength.

As an ethical system it raises at once the awkward dilemma, already parting its disciples—Is the Man whom we are to worship the whole man, the actual man, with all his appetites and passions; or the ideal man, the sublimated soul of all that is noble and good in him? The first alternative leads by a short-cut to the denial of all ethical distinctions, in the apotheosis of lust now calling forth the poetic glamourings of Swinburne and his set. The second alternative, chosen by the nobler natures, in leading them to look for the true Man in the Ideal of Goodness which rises in his nature, leads them along the path of the one true and universal religion, in all times and among all peoples; and reveals, before and above them, the one Human Ideal, which is perfectly bodied in the Christly Character.

This worship of Humanity is only another name for the worship of the Christ. The ideal it lifts on high is a phase of the Christian Ideal, turned away from earth hitherto, and now rising upon our yearning aspiration. The sense of organic

life in man; the warm flow of social sympathy that draws classes and nations into the bond of brotherhood; the recognition of the regeneration of earthly society, as the true aim of man; the generous and lofty enthusiasm for humanity, which devotes men's energies to the service of their fellows; the sublime self-abnegation which prompts to this sacrifice of ease and pleasure, "mindless of heaven or hell;" the fine, ethereal vision of the after-life of man upon the earth, in the immortality of thought and love—all this is in no sense new. Every conception can be found in the pages of Christian poets. They were all, historically, first unveiled to the western world in Jesus. They all shine there still with unapproachable majesty. They are all features of the Christ Face, translucent through All Saints, transparent in the Son of Mary. The Enthusiasm of Humanity is the religion of the Christ.

The most powerful glasses, sweeping the field of human thought, disclose no new sun, "to be a light by day," other than the Christly Character, which rose full-orbed over the Judæan hills eighteen centuries ago.

Let us hear the testimony of two strong and noble minds outside the churches: the pure-souled Frenchman who, turning away in disgust from the ministry of the Roman church, has given his ripest years to a finely critical study of the Begin-

nings of Christianity; and the grand old Englishman who, driven off from the ministry of the Protestant church, has consecrated his virile intellect to the liberation, from the decadent churches, of the Soul of Christianity.

“Thus we comprehend how, by an exceptional destiny, pure Christianity still presents itself, at the end of eighteen centuries, in the character of a universal and eternal religion. It is because, in fact, the religion of Jesus is in some respects the final religion. . . . After him there is nothing more but to develop and fructify. Christianity has thus become almost synonymous with religion. All that may be done outside of this great and good Christian tradition will be sterile. . . . Jesus founded the absolute religion, excluding nothing, determining nothing, save in its essence.” (Renan: *Life of Jesus.*)

“We understand ourselves to be risking no new assertion, but simply reporting what is already the conviction of the greatest in our age, when we say that, cheerfully recognizing, gratefully appropriating, whatever Voltaire has proved, or any other man has proved or shall prove, the Christian Religion, once here, cannot again pass away; that, in one form or the other form, it will endure through all time. . . . Were the memory of this faith never so obscured, as indeed, in all times, the coarse passions and perceptions of the world do

all but obliterate it, in the hearts of most; yet in every pure soul, in every poet and wise man, it finds a new missionary, a new martyr, till the great volume of universal history is finally closed, and man's destinies are fulfilled in this earth. It is a height to which the human species were fated and enabled to attain; and from which, having once attained it, they can never retrograde." (Carlyle: Essay on Voltaire.)

Our theosophists, who have journeyed to India to unearth the true religion of the future, might have stayed at home. It is here in disguise. "There standeth one among you whom ye know not."

When the Theology of the Coming Christianity finds its voice, men will have no lack of answer to the life-riddle. Few, brief, and simple will be its words about the everlasting mysteries; but they will have the ring of honest conviction and the stamp of the highest authority, the only real authority: the affirmation of the soul of man, speaking through the reason, the conscience, the affections, and phrased articulately in the supreme man, Jesus the Christ, with the very voice of God. When the Christ that is to be begins to preach there will be a good spell.

VI.

Sublimate the ethics of all noble races, and the loftiest ideals, whose subtle fascination has ever

drawn the soul of man upward, the vague dreams of perfection unto which our age is tumultuously yearning, are all found bodied in the spirit of Jesus.

There is no need of proving this. It stands confessed everywhere. The world owns, with Renan, that "the Sermon on the Mount will never be surpassed."

Because this is confessedly so, and because the Christian Churches, despite their defects, their decadence even, hold up the Christly Character for the aspiration of their followers; bidding them "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus;" reminding them ever, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" because of this those churches are still the centres of moral force in our civilization, the salt preserving the body from corruption, the leaven yet to leaven the whole lump. As the clouds raised by the incense which ecclesiasticism and theology have swung before Jesus shall clear away, the world shall see that Perfect Character to be the very Christ, its reproduction in men's lives Christ's being born and dwelling in them, its transformation of the race His Second Coming. Then the forces now drawn aside into building up The Church and The Faith will be concentrated upon the one true task of the Christian religion—building up the Character of Christ in humanity. Then the sym-

metric fulness of the Human Ideal, in the man Christ Jesus, will be seen; and the exhaustless force working from it, through the churches, to regenerate society will be felt; and the renaissance of civilization will dawn.

Now when so much is commingled with the Christian Ideal, as of coequal or even superior importance; when by this adulteration of the truth as it is in Jesus so much of its vital energy is lost; we scarcely dream of the forces of social regeneration stored up in the simple faith that the true Human Ideal, the norm and pattern for all aspiration of actual men and women, the law of life unto which all mankind and, back of man, all nature upward yearns, is in the Character of Jesus.

When our enthusiastic worshippers of the perfectibility of man, dreaming of infinite heights of aspiration, shall come back humbly to see this; and when the churches, perceiving that to preach the Sermon on the Mount as their Master did, by living it, is the true apostolate, shall make it their rule of faith, their basis for the social polity of earth—then all that is noble in the world and the Church will be one in the worship of God through Christ, which is the aspiration for the Human Ideal in which is Imaged the Eternal Righteousness.

Signs of this better day are to be traced in the long line of effort in the English church, the

most representative of all the Churches, from the Cambridge Platonists down to the Broad Church of our own day, to return to this simple essential conception of The Christ; and with it the instinctive turning of the Christian Enthusiasm into the channels of public affairs and social science, of the arts and all the humanities. It is this restored faith in the true Christ which has made men like Maurice and Stanley and Kingsley and McDonald and Hughes leaders in Christian Socialism, warm sympathizers with, and active helpers of, every aspiration of the people for larger, freer life.

Signs of this better day are in every genuine reconstructive social movement, all whose ideals are unconsciously the Christian ideals, all whose aspirations are blind yearnings for the spirit of Jesus, all whose plaintive cries are cries upon the carpenter's son for the help that he has brought our western world.

"Liberty, equality, fraternity"—these are the ideals fashioned by the spirit of Christ. Cooperation, the gospel of the day, is only the Law of Christ which the theologian Paul had found to be—"Bear ye one another's burdens."

The beautiful life in common which, from Plato down to Robert Owen, has loomed above the horizon of time as the far-off social ideal; whose crude, impatient realization is the impossible dead level of communism; the state wherein, without

maiming free individuality, all selfishness shall be swallowed up in the larger life of the community—this is but the vision dawning over the Christly Character, and for one brief moment coming forth in fact in that society where “all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”

The perfect commonwealth must grow around the Holy Communion of Him who taught men of all races and classes to call one another Brothers, and breathed through them the inspiration for this higher life in opening their lips to say, “Our Father which art in heaven.”

The eminent Belgian economist, Lavaleye, writing of the changes coming upon society from the action of these social yearnings, finds no such danger to Christianity in this real revolution as many fear; for he sees in them only the issue of the Christian spirit: “If Christianity were taught and understood conformably to the spirit of its Founder, the existing social organization could not last a day.” (Introduction to Primitive Property.)

He quotes to the same effect Fichte: “Christianity yet carries in its breast a renovating power of which we have no conception. Hitherto it has only acted on individuals, and through them on the State indirectly. But whoever can appreciate its power, whether he be a mere believer or an

independent thinker, will confess that it is destined some day to become the inner, organizing power of the State ; and then it will reveal itself to the world in all the depths of its ideas and the richness of its blessing."

Emerson once wrote : " An acceptance of the sentiment of love throughout Christendom for a season would bring the felon and the outcast to our side in tears, with the devotion of his faculties to our service." (Man the Reformer.)

The "sentiment of love" is the ethical soul of Christianity. It is the very spirit of Jesus. It is the Christ. Its acceptance is the true faith of Christ. Such, then, are the glorious victories before the "truth as it is in Jesus," according to another one of the great Christians who has turned away from the ministry of the Church, to preach the Christ that is to be. No confession of the ethical vitality and future transforming triumphs of the Christ can exceed that of Renan : "Jesus remains to humanity an inexhaustible source of moral regenerations."

VII.

Humanity craves to-day a religion which will make the worship of God one with the aspiration for human perfection, the service of God one with every aid to human progress ; which, inspiring the individual with the love of God, shall, through

that holy affection, draw him into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, fulfilling the love of God in the love of man ; which shall thus, by his yearnings for the heavenly world, flood high the tides upon this earthly sphere, and pour the deep, strong currents of his enthusiasm for the eternal ideals into the turbid channels of his daily life. This it is to find in the restored Christianity, the religion of the Christ, the faith of a Man in whom the Human Ideal Imaging God has been incarnated.

Matthew Arnold, in his fine sonnet on The Divinity, inspired by St. Bernard's great word,

“ 'Tis God himself becomes apparent when
God's wisdom and God's goodness are display'd,”

closes thus :

“ *God's wisdom and God's goodness !*—Ay, but fools
Misdefine these till God knows them no more.
Wisdom and goodness, they are God !—What schools
Have yet so much as heard this simpler lore ?
This no saint preaches, and this no church rules ;
'Tis in the desert, now and heretofore.”

It is being preached, however, and men are coming to discern that the Intelligence animating all life, the “Power not ourselves making for righteousness,” the Spiritual Energy slowly working out in all things the laws of a moral order—the most incontestable of facts—is God. So men are coming to look for the presence of God in the

reason and the conscience, in the life of this eternal wisdom and goodness which all existence shows developing through nature towards some perfect manifestation, some full revelation of God. The sun-lit height of human excellence, where this Eternal Character shines clear and strong, will then prove the mount where God reveals himself; where, before the man bodying the wisdom and goodness which are God, the true Immanuel, God with us, men will bow in the confession of a faith which is both worship and aspiration; a faith voiced perfectly for our age by Tennyson:

“Strong Son of God, immortal Love!

.

Thou seemest human and divine,

The highest, holiest manhood, thou :

Our wills are ours, we know not how ;

Our wills are ours, to make them thine.”

Then shall the world once more hear it said, “Master, all men seek after thee.” Then the White Christ, as the Norsemen beautifully called him, will be seen going forth conquering and to conquer.

The present leader in the significant movement in India towards a pure Christian theism, Chesub Chunder Sen, even now thus preaches to his countrymen :

“It is not politics, it is not diplomacy that has laid hold of the Indian heart. It is not the glitter-

ing bayonet or the fiery cannon that can make our people loyal. No, none of these can hold India in subjection. Armies have never conquered the heart of a nation. But your hearts have been touched, conquered, subjected by a superior power. The power—need I tell you?—is Christ. It is Christ who rules British India, and not the British government. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus ever deserved the bright, the precious diadem of India—and Jesus shall have it. . . . He is coming; in the fulness of time he will come to you, O young men of India. He will come to you as self-surrender, as the life of God in man, as humble and obedient sonship.”

Jesus is not dethroned. Our children's children are to be his subjects. He is only entering upon his reign. His Spirit is no bar to human progress. It is the inspiration in that progress, the pattern above it. The Christ is not a-dying. He is rising again and ascending on high, even to the right hand of God, where he saith, “All power is given to me, in heaven and on earth;” and “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Around him the sons of men will draw, and a new Church rise; the Society of Man redeemed from all ignorance and error, and lifted into the life of the sons of God.

Afar off I behold the vision of the seer, the City of God coming down out of heaven, and realizing

upon the earth the patterns showed upon the mount. Four-square lie its walls, facing each quarter of earth, fronting every province of life, in the symmetric proportions of a perfection excluding nothing that is truly human. Three-fold its gates on every wall, opening full, free access to each activity on every side of life; shut not by day, and so forever open, since there is no night there, no power of darkness dividing earth and zoning the realm of goodness with a territory of evil, but one effulgent reign of holy light; and into them the glory and honor of the nations incessant pour; every legitimate function of human life, industry and commerce, science and art, bringing its undutiable commodities, every good man walking its free citizen. In this Pantheon of Man stand the forms of every heroic, beneficent and saintly life, grouped round one central figure: the Sacred Year of this Church of Humanity—the Calendar of earth's worthies in thought and deed, the roll-call of All the Saints. No temple shall be there, to sever religion from the daily round, to make the home, the school, the exchange, and the capitol seem secular and common, unholy and undivine; but, in the presence of the spirit of purity and peace, men shall find every place none other than the house of God, and the Lamb shall be the temple of it. Beautiful the worship which shall rise from every field of labor, the aroma of life's

vital energies, the bloom of life's happy works, lifting its incense of worshipful aspiration unto that Human Ideal in which God is seen to be Imaged, that vision of the Perfect Character of the Eternal Righteousness shadowed in a Man, whose name, forever sacred as a household word among the families of earth, is—Jesus, the Christ.

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